

**TRAIL LIFE
IN THE
CANADIAN ROCKIES**

B. W. MITCHELL

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BY
B. W. MITCHELL

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TO NIP

who has shared with me the delights
and the hardships of the trails of
mountain and forest as we travel to-
gether the Hard Trail that ends at
the starting of the Last Long Trail

PREFACE

THIS book is not a record of serious, scientific exploration. True, in these glorious summers in the saddle we reached some places where we had had no predecessors; we had the rare joy of seeing some scenes of beauty and grandeur that no human eye had seen before; but our main object was the high happiness of communion with unspoiled Nature at her grandest, and we attained it fully. If I shall succeed in making any worshiper of the Red Gods see some of these glories through my eyes, and in sharing with such an one the delight or difficulty, the comedy or occasional near-tragedy of these wild, free days of our life in the mountains, I shall be satisfied.

One word is due as to the personnel of the various expeditions covering nine summers. Ours was the rare good fortune to have the nucleus of the party the same each year. These tried and true companions gave a solidarity to the company, the advantages of which were inestimable. Every one who has gone into the wilderness well knows how speedily the names of members of a party yield place to sobriquets more or less appropriate. Personal allusions throughout will be by means of such nicknames, except for purposes of serious or scientific statement.

The illustrations are from the author's negatives unless otherwise stated.

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CHAPTER I

"IN THE BEGINNING"

"The movie of a hemisphere." Memories geographical. Wild life of the plains and ponds. The approach to Heaven. Field. Snow Peak Avenue. Emerald Lake. The breaking in camp. Cinnamon! The two fool hens.

A TRANSCONTINENTAL ride across Canada, "Our Lady of the Snows," is the movie of a hemisphere, a priceless lesson in geography and physiography. For nearly the first third of the long way from the Atlantic to the Pacific the route traverses the wrack and ruin of the Eastern continental forest. After the cultivated country come long miles of denuded hills, the rains and the floods washing away the soil to barrenness between the granite outcrops: miles of desolate stumpage gemmed with sapphire lakes: miles of sawed lumber along the right-of-way, every water course that will float a log jammed with them: and mills, mills, mills; saw mills, finishing mills, the thrice-accursed pulp mills, at every vantage spot. The lion's jaws of the lumber mills devour the richness of the land: the pulp hyenas gnaw the bony remnant to annihilation. One can forgive a man for destroying a noble tree to build himself a home; but to wrap a pound of sugar, never. Then

skirting the rockbound shores of Lake Superior, "Gitchee Gumee, Big Sea Water," the Great Fresh Sea of the North, as the early Hudson Bay Company adventurers called it, icy and sweet, where the trout leap to the fly in the curving swells of the surf, one enters a country that makes real the spectral names of early school days. Lake of the Woods! how far, far away, unreal, shadowy, it sounded years ago in the "g'oggerfy" class. Behold it now: cities on its shores; trim white yachts on its bosom; and the noble woods that named it—a memory. Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan. Time was when we heard these words as words only, empty, meaningless, representing to our uncomprehending little brains a splotch or a crooked line on a red and yellow map. We half believed then that the pesky teacher had made up these words out of odds and ends of queer syllables, just to bother us. Behold now the broad lake, the mighty, rushing, muddy river.

Then come the vast treeless levels, "the plains" of that geography class of old, the continental plateau. What an exuberance of life in that lonely expanse! Flocks of unfamiliar black-birds dot the air; black-birds with red wings, black-birds with white wings, black-birds with yellow heads. What are those graceful snowy gulls doing here, as far as they can get from the ocean? Here they breed, and supplement their fishy food with insects and worms. Close by the track are water-holes, many of them old buffalo wallows, reminders of the tragedy of the northern herd. Now they swarm with the choicest wild ducks, seeming to know no fear. Perhaps a hen mallard may guide her little fluffs of yellow fuzz a few yards farther away as

the train roars past. A flock of canvasbacks may flutter a bit, or a bunch of trim and graceful teal paddle into the shore grasses to hide. But yonder wise old gander, gray backed and white cheeked, the real old honker who quickens your heart-beats at Barnegat or Currituck, stands balanced on one splay foot and deigns not to blink an eye or to goose-step to one side. Sickle-bill curlews circle above their crouching broods. Black brant and wavies nonchalantly filter muddy water through snapping bills. But it is not bird life alone that is exuberantly evident here. That gray fellow toddling off at a lumbering roll is a badger: he has probably caught sight of that other gray specter, yonder, loping easily along and looking hungry: he has no use for wolves. And see, not twenty yards from the rails, that bunch of prong-horn antelope, the most suicidally curious of game animals, fearlessly watching the passing train: one is actually scratching his ear with his hoof. These beautiful creatures are rigidly protected in the cattle lands, and that by the ranchmen themselves, for they herd with the cattle in the winter, and teach them—or so the cattlemen think—to dig through the deep snow to the dried grasses beneath. This was the picture a long decade back. Now the land is covered with watered silk of waving wheat or with vast stock ranches; but the ponds still swarm with breeding aquatic birds.

At the western limit of the plains stands Calgary, the last outpost of the great central plateau. Then—the Rockies. I shall never forget my first sight of the Canadian Rockies. We had left Calgary in the gray dawn and had crept shiveringly from warm berths, hustled drowsily into clothing and groped through

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dark curtained aisles to the rear of the observation car, whence, warmly wrapped, we peered around engineward every few minutes in the hope of seeing something. The level plains became wavy, like the lazy swells of a vast quiet ocean. The swells billowed higher and higher into foothills. Then the rounded crests of the foothills were pierced here and there by persistent sharp strata set edgewise that simply wouldn't keep covered. The East turned to orange, then to gleaming gold; and as the bright sun topped the horizon, Nip looked around the end of the car once more and shrieked. Three noble peaks, glittering and flashing like the facets of a diamond, seemed to hang in the air ahead, and their snow and polished ice shot back at us the level rays of the mounting sun. They were the Three Sisters of Canmore. We were at the gateway of the mountains; for us, the gateway to nine summers of joy. In the glow of a rare morning we crossed the Great Divide. A tiny rivulet, born of a bubbling snow-fed spring, dashes against a boulder beside the track and parts asunder. One rippling branch of it finds its way to the Bow, then to the Saskatchewan, Lake Winnipeg, the Nelson, Hudson's Bay and the cold North Atlantic; the other, buffeted in the wild Kicking Horse, is lost in the Columbia and the vastness of the Pacific.

We detrained at Field, for we were to go into a preliminary camp near by, at lovely Emerald Lake, to break in the untried in preparation for the sterner experiences of the savage Selkirks. Hungrily we broke for the breakfast room of the Mount Stephen. Those were the days when transcontinental schedules rarely set forth the realities of time and space. Sometimes

it was hard to tell whether one was on to-day's train or yesterday's; and when to-day's caught up to yesterday's, and two or three trains in each direction arrived at a division point at about the same time, the hotel was not seldom eaten out of house and home before the last comers had the ghost of a chance. But it was, notwithstanding, delightful to find real hotel comfort in out-of-the-way places, even if one did have to draw a check for the privilege of drawing a breath. Soft stepping Japanese pretended ceremoniously to anticipate your every wish; and if the food supply ran short in the midst of a meal, it was announced in terms of such courtly grace that one almost felt grateful for not having an order filled. Who could really crave bread when a soft Oriental voice whispered with deepest reverence some gurgling syllables which must have signified: "Oh, most illustrious Son-of-a-Shogun, the honorable bread is no more"? And roast chicken was held as Dead Sea apples at the deferential announcement: "Banzai! Thou descendant of all the Samurais, whose knife is as a headman's sword and whose fork is as the spear of a warrior, thy unworthy predecessors have consumed the honorable fowl, even to the feathers thereof."

The most beautiful driveway in all America curves along the dashing Emerald River from Field to Emerald Lake. It is a splendid road, at the edge of the wilderness, cut through a forest of lodge-pole pines. It has been named Snow Peak Avenue, for at every turn the view opens through a colonnade of these slender pines upon some marvelous effect of snow-capped peaks and mighty glaciers. The Lake, green as the emerald whose name it bears, bursts upon the

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vision as a perfect surprise. One moment the dense columns of the slender pines darkly wall in the driveway: the next, outspread grandeur fairly takes the breath. There is snow-capped Wapta of the double dome, the needle-pointed Emerald Peak and the President. Facing them across the green water Burgess boldly flings its bulk skyward, its stupendous perpendicular cliff rising sheer three thousand feet above the talus slopes, themselves above the timber: and closest of all, the wooded steeps of Carnarvon, with the swath of a great avalanche down the face through the noble trees, and huge broken trunks heaped inextricably at its base like giant jackstraws, many of which lay far out in the lake.

The northern shore of the lake was designed by nature for a camp site. The slender lodge-pole pines give place here to giant Douglas firs and black spruces. Near the lake they grow wide apart, giving plenty of space for pitching tents and for a great stone altar about ten feet square by three feet in height, on which at night the camp fire safely blazed. Fire is the great danger in the Northland. The very ground beneath is inflammable vegetable débris of resinous pine needles. Fire creeps smolderingly along underground. It is a common sight to see, while basking around your camp fire, a black spot as big as a penny appear on the surface of the pine-needle soil three or four feet from the blaze. This surprising spot grows and spreads until it covers a palm breadth: a glowing ember appears in the center of it, and a wind will fan the dull red to flame. Men fighting a forest fire have been trapped by this treacherous underground fire-train breaking out fifty feet in their rear. Needless

to say, the utmost care is imperative, and water in plenty should be within arm's reach at every camp fire in the forest. A stone altar is, of course, impossible on the trail; but at a base camp it relieves the mind of the careful camper of much anxiety. It is as nearly fool-proof as a camp fire site can be made; and besides, it invites to the worship of the Red Gods.

Our tents were pitched just under Carnarvon at the edge of the avalanche path. These great snow slides occur chiefly in the early spring. Then the accumulated snows of a whole winter break with a crash far up the mountain sides, and sweep fearfully down, snapping great trees like matchwood and hurling the trunks far before the rushing mass like arrows from the bows of the Titans. Tremendous atmospheric disturbance accompanies the downrush of the snowy billow and nearby trees are leveled by the blast in its wake. The remnants of the great avalanche, thousands of tons of hard-packed snow, still lingered in the late June days a few yards from the camp. It was promptly tunneled and became for us a cold-storage warehouse, the entrance to which was closed by a gate of small logs and further protected by exterior draperies of worn and unwashed underwear. I fancy I can see a sneer or a shudder at this: yet it gave protection equal to a pacing sentry; for no bear would ever break into our stores of food past the dreaded scent of an unseen man. And bears there were a plenty, of all sizes, kinds and colors. But there was nothing to fear; for a wild bear, unless wounded or a female with cubs, is as timid as a rabbit.

A day or two after settling in camp, Nip, prowling down the lovely Emerald River with rod and flies,

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came suddenly upon a baby cinnamon bear about as large as a setter dog. Now Nip loves animals, and dearly loves to play with them. The cub swarmed up a lodge-pole pine while his discoverer, all unmindful of the terrible risk she ran, stationed herself at the foot of the tree and conversed with that cub for a quarter hour. The cub would climb down just out of reach, hang by one brown furry arm and plaintively weep, while real tears ran down his muzzle to his little black nose. Every attempt at retreat was cut off by his tormentor, and the little fellow would scramble back up the tree and wail. The long delayed thought finally flashed into Nip's brain that these wails were evidently to be translated into English as "Ma-a-ma-a-a!" "I just hit the high spots on the back trail to camp," she explained when she got her breath back. Nothing could have saved her had the old bear returned. That she did not is to be explained by the fact that she must have had two cubs, one of which remained with her, while the other, lagging, was cut off from his line of retreat and treed. All the creatures of the wild seem entirely to lack the number sense; and the mother in any such case always makes off with that portion of her family which is in her immediate company, regardless of the others whom she cannot count. The novice in the ways of the woods, armed or unarmed, should make it a cardinal principle of action to vanish instantly, and vanish *by the way he came*, should he ever find in the wilderness the young of any of the larger carnivora. Do not stop to admire or to photograph. Go.

For a few days we loafed around camp as the spirit moved, getting accustomed to the altitude, taking easy

walks around the lake shore, or exploring the superb gorge at the head of which the Emerald Glacier pours down from the needle-pointed Emerald Peak. A wild glacial torrent roaring down this gorge in as varied fashion as the Cataract of Lodore is spanned by several wonderful snow bridges, and on a broad snow field near the head of the gorge, at the edges of which the yellow snow lilies were blooming through the snow, some confirmed golfiacs among us laid out a mimic course, with iced tees and frozen hazards, and banged glacial golf balls with alpenstocks for clubs.

In the forest encircling the lake abounded the Franklin grouse, known the North country over as the fool hen, by reason of its stupid and foolish lack of fear of man. When the poultry supply runs low, you don't shoot the fool hen; you kill her with a stone. And you keep throwing until you kill her, for she utterly refuses to fly away. One of the party, serving her novitiate, as she strolled the woods, came upon a crippled grouse. The poor bird fluttered ahead with drooping wing, while the tender-hearted one pursued with mercy as her motive, wholly unaware of half a dozen pairs of bright beady eyes watching her from under bushes and pine needles, where they had all scurried at the mother bird's first warning cluck. Further and further went the pursuer and the pursued; and when the latter, with wing now fully restored, finally vanished, the former, looking about her, realized that she was properly and effectually lost. To her credit be it said, she didn't get rattled, and she did remember instructions; for she sat herself down on a stone and stayed there, blowing periodic blasts upon a shrill whistle, one of which should always be carried by each member

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of a party of the wilds, against just such a contingency. Of course she was missed at the supper call, but the search party soon found her and escorted her back to camp in triumph. She told to a mirthful company the story of her adventure in avian charity, and the verdict, unanimously rendered, was, "One fool hen chasing another."

CHAPTER II

A TRY-OUT CLIMB

Robinson Crusoe and the pleasures of mountaineering. Carnarvon. An easy climb. A wonderful vista. A mountain storm.

ROBINSON CRUSOE laid the plans between steady puffs at his pipe as we were gathered around the camp fire, basking in its grateful blaze. Cold blasts blew down from the snows, and with sweaters tight buttoned and collars turned up we hugged ourselves, literally, to keep warm, and figuratively in an evil glee, at the thought of our unfortunate friends sweltering in the summer heat.

"There are ninety-seven different sources of pleasure in mountain climbing," said Robinson oracularly. We pondered earnestly over his dark saying, and had counted up sixty-four of them when the wind changed and we scrambled to windward, choking and with stinging eyes, to reflect yet further. But we found only a few more of these upper-world joys ere the smoke again enveloped us. It is curious how camp fire smoke with its acrid burden of pyroligneous acid will always find you out, especially when you are thinking hard and don't want to be disturbed; and when you drowse away to a nap, leaning against your comfortable log, the pungent clouds, before they strangle you, set you regularly to dreaming; and you nearly always imagine

yourself a ham hanging in Grandfather's smokehouse back on the old farm.

Nevertheless, a roaring camp fire on a great altar is the most fascinating thing in the world. Elves and fairies and many a little imp dance amid its forking flames. It deepens the mystery of the great black forest beyond it, and you never know just what eyes may be watching you from the dark void that your eyes cannot pierce.

Ere the fitful gusts off Burgess drove us to 'douse' the fire and turn in, Robinson had revealed his plans for the morrow. They involved a climb of Carnarvon. "Just a little breaking-in climb," he encouraged, "something easy, to prepare for the real thing."

Now as Robinson Crusoe's idea of the "real thing" is that it consists in hanging by your fingers to smooth perpendicularity, while your toes earnestly grope for a crevice wherein to squeeze themselves for a brief second of support, we hardly knew exactly what to expect on that climb. Robinson is a true being of the peaks, a species of huge crawling bug with suckers on his fingers and with eyes and antennæ on his toes; and the ninety-seventh delight of mountaineering, as catalogued by him, is to move in a vertical plane dodging eternity by the skin of your teeth. He is one of the very Genii of the mountains, and I had rather make a risky climb with him than with a professional Swiss guide. His instinct for mountain path-finding is extraordinary: I have seen him view an unclimbed peak, mark out a route with sure confidence, and deviate in ascent and descent not fifty yards from the proposed course: and to sit with him on some snowy summit reveling in the glorious panorama outspread to the

world's edge, to enjoy his talk upon the geology of the peak or upon the structure of some Alpine flower, to hear him declaim lofty poetry suggested by the scene, or sing some noble song, is a feast of sense and reason. The man is of such modesty withal that to divulge his name would be to arouse his deep displeasure. His friends know him best by the sobriquet I have used. Even in such limited identification I am taking risks; but I do it *honoris causa*, a deserved tribute to a loved friend, a consummate mountaineer, an inspiring spirit—explorer, scientist, linguist, poet. His fame has spread along the Great Divide from Mount Assiniboine to beyond the Athabaska, till he has become a legendary hero of the landscape, with his red bandanna turban and his patriarchal beard of but slightly inferior tinge—"prairie fire in action," as he describes it. Tourists ask to have him pointed out, and one Englishman, of treacherous memory for monikers, walked out from Field to the lake to see the great man with the queer name, and threw us all into convulsions by inquiring eagerly for "Christopher Columbus."

One important feature in favor of Carnarvon was that it looked easy. But it is one thing to inspect a mountain from its base, and quite another to climb it. The chosen path for the ascent was the broad swath of the avalanche which had swept bare the center of its track and heaped up *chevaux-de-frise* of tangled boughs in impenetrable chaos along its edges. In the gullies and along the margin of the standing timber twenty feet of hard-packed snow still remained; while nature had covered the raw scars of the main avalanche track with luxuriant beds of forget-

me-nots through which we waded to the waist, and the individual flowers were half an inch in diameter. Above the heavenly blue of the forget-me-nots came lovely painted cups and pulsatilla, giant anemones two inches across, and many a thicket of pliant alders and dwarf willows, which all the power of the avalanche only bends but never breaks. Through these dense thickets we wriggled as best we could: fortunately they grew more sparsely as we gained altitude. At last we emerged from this deterrent tangle on the steep bare sides of a gorge still nearly filled with snow. It was a perfect illustration in miniature of the action of a glacier in forming lateral moraines. The surface of the snow was convex, of remarkable regularity of curvature, and on either side of the mass was ranged a row of stones and boulders pushed out of the way by the irresistible sweep of the snow. Terminal moraine there was none, for everything in front of that mighty force was now reposing fathoms deep in Emerald Lake.

Soon were noticeable the plain signs of increasing altitude in the gradual diminution of the size of plant life. The snow lilies, whose golden stars twinkled knee-high at the lake level, here nodded on slender stems but a few inches above the scant soil. The charming pulsatilla, whose late blooms we gathered on the first inclines without stooping and many of whose hairy seed-tufts were fully developed, were here just bursting into flower close above the broken shale, and the tall luxurious columbines of the lower slopes hung very humbly and lowly their abashed heads of pale yellow and red.

Panting and perspiring we plodded on over broken

shale, almost slipping back two steps for every step forward, like the cat in the well in the famous problem. But the end of that cat savored of theological bias and strict orthodoxy, while we made slow and painful progress upward despite the slips. On shale muscular power is expended to sheer waste, and the hand cannot help the foot. Nor does it avail to stop for rest or breath, for you slip while you stop. Call this, as may please you, a paradox or an Irish 'bull'; it is true. Now another note of still increasing altitude could be read in the clusters of exquisite Alpine pinks. Nothing can be lovelier than these delicately beautiful little flowers of the tops of the world. Picture a pin-cushion of palest pea-green moss, gem its smooth surface with tiny five-point stars of vivid pink, and you have the poetically named *Silene*, "bloom of the wood-gods." Looking coyly and sweetly forth from among the confused masses of broken rock, it is irresistibly beautiful. You fall in love with it in spite of yourself.

A rest now—partly to admire these fairy cushions; partly to look back over the world we had left and at the new and wider world opened to us in the ever-increasing distances we could command with our enlarged vision. Far below us lay Emerald Lake, now hardly deserving its name; for hot weather had moved the Emerald Glacier to unwonted energy, and the lake was stained with glacial grindings, impalpably fine silt, which blurred the clear emerald water to a dull turquoise blue. The lake looked for all the world like the bluing vat of some vast cosmic laundry, over which fitfully drifted the shadows of passing clouds. Beyond the lake Burgess rose in all his majesty of vertical

cliff and jagged sky-line. How much grandeur is added to a peak when viewed from a great elevation! Vaux and the Chancellor, off to the right, seemed doubled in size. Wapta, of the snowy dome, and Mount Field, the "coffin," were impressive in huge bulk as they never were from the lake level. The avalanche paths which seamed the sides of Wapta showed plainly the distribution upon his slopes of the enormous masses of the winter's snows under the drive of the prevailing winter gales, and the trend of cleavage of the close-packed *névé*, year after year, as the pressure of the accumulated snow finally overcame its cohesive power. Turning away from the vista of Wapta and his brethren, the Van Horne Range and its dominant peak, the graceful pyramid of Mount King, on the extreme right, could be seen just topping the great timbered foothill that branched off here from our mountain, like a flying buttress, to follow the course of the Emerald River. A look straight up the slope gave negative results, revealing no change in the configuration of the slope still to be negotiated. We saw a sky-line, and knew it for a fake, a mere bulge of the mountain side that hid the true summit. We saw now also the beginnings of a snow field—a long glistening slope of spotless white stretching up and away before us at an angle appalling to a tenderfoot.

"Keep to the shale," is Robinson Crusoe's warning. "The bright sun has been darting its rays into that snow slope too long for good going." So we kept to the shale, and when we had breath enough we 'cussed' it. But the fragments grew larger. Stones gave place to rocks. Rocks yielded to giant boulders, among which we wormed a weary way carefully noting

the poise and probable state of equilibrium of each great block before we touched it. Large rocks resting upon shale or snow are always treacherous, and are a fertile source of danger in mountain climbing. They generally lie in more or less unstable equilibrium, and broken limbs or even death itself may result from trusting to them any weight whatever. The infallible selection of the proper stone on which to step is a sure test of a good climber.

Now at last the solid framework of the peak showed above the shale, and we gladly clambered into a great niche among the rocks and caught, drop by drop, the slowly melting snow. As we sipped a spoonful of it, it was most refreshing. "But why thirst on a snow field?" I hear the uninitiated ask. Never eat snow on an ascent or on a long fatiguing hike, however tormenting your thirst may be. Snow most seriously affects the nerves of the stomach, and a total nervous collapse, with grave damage to the heart may result. In mountain climbing every atom of nerve must be functioning, and functioning perfectly, if casualty would be averted. As we sat there sipping the luscious drip, the last panting climber crawled wearily to join the group, and as he curled up in a limp heap he muttered a great truth. "I tell you," he said, "the fellow who named these the Rocky Mountains made a darned good guess."

A few crackers and a bit of cheese, with a prune or two, aided mightily in the short pull to the summit. A bit of nasty snow to cross, jamming the alpenstock well down on the upper side of the slope; a little easy rock work, and we were there, on the pinnacle of our peak's roof. Glorious! Find shelter from

the icy wind and drink in the amazing splendor of it all. Then photograph it quickly before yon wicked-looking clouds wreak vengeance on the invaders of their realm. Burgess now appears dwarfed to insignificance by mighty snow-streaked Stephen behind him. Triple peaked Goodsir looms tremendous between these giants and the Chancellor, whose vast snow field may now be seen in all its wide magnificence. Across the Wapta saddle, barrier of the magic Yoho, Daly rises bleak and black and frowning from the *névé* of the Daly Glacier, from whose deep blue icy caverns gushes Takkakkaw. Near, the pure snows of the President curve around into the Emerald Peak. Rapids of ice, cascades of ice, long sweeps of icy current, fall, azure-crevassed, to the torrent fan of the lake. Nearest of all, the rugged Celt, McMullin, gave us a vivid picture of "the real thing" in ascents, solid rock and ice and snow, repellent, somber, menacing. Down the long snow slopes at frequent intervals huge boulders fell, leaving plain trails in the everlasting snows; and they slide and roll and bound to the final precipice, over which they plunge with roar and crash. Listen! Here amid this stern arctic desolation a sweet bird-note trills upon the air. Some wee bird is warbling his little throat out in sheer joy. He is an Alpine song-sparrow, but he seems too dainty and too frail for these austere heights.

One vista remains—to the west and southwest from our peak. One can remember such scenes to the day of death, but their beauty and grandeur he cannot share nor tell. Language falters in the attempt even to hint at the glory. The whole valley of the Kicking Horse, dwarfed to a silver thread, is spread in pan-

orama between its gigantic walls. But the far distance! There gleam the wild masses of the Selkirks. There is Capristo, where the Esperantists have written their name large; for Capristo is the Esperanto word for goat, and the great mountain is a favorite resort of these droll creatures of the heights. There against the sky, in virginal white, like a gleaming angel, Mount Purity lifts her head, guarded by the knight errant of the range, Sir Donald's black pyramid. They glitter in the sun, the army of the giants. Peak beyond peak they "rise, shine and give God the glory." They fire and fever the blood. They dominate. They seize and claim for their own. Their white spirits shadow the soul with their wings.

But the clouds have been driving up apace, forcing us at last to climb down from the summit, exposed to every whirling gust, to some safer nook. That snow patch just below us must be crossed before the storm breaks. Creeping down along the brink of a giddy precipice, we gathered among safe rocks just as the whirl of the blast broke upon us. The air was filled with the stabbing daggers of snow and sleet. We knew it was raining down at camp; and we took comfort, for the snow and sleet were dry as dust in the intense cold. Weather among the high mountains is fickle as a coquette. Its changes are kaleidoscopic. In fifteen minutes it can give you everything in the category of weather, from a thunder gust to a snow squall—often both of these at once. It has never been better described than in this bit of doggerel, attributed to Edward Whymper, the famous mountaineer:

“First it rained and then it blew;
Then it friz and then it snow;
Then it fogged and then it thew,
And very shortly after then
It blew and snow and thew again.”

Now Mr. Whympers is celebrated as the only human being who ever fell down the Matterhorn and lived to recall his sensations in transit. It is to wonder how far that fall is to be held responsible for the jingle.

This time, happily, it didn't fog, and the storm passed as quickly as it came. Down we scrambled, resting much weight on alpenstocks held firmly to the rear. At the snow field we hoped for a lovely glissade. The snow, however, was too soft for glissading, but it gave us some delightfully exhilarating skating. With the snow in this softened state we could strike out with exactly the motion of ice skating, and when well under way cover twenty feet down the steep slope at every stroke. The best fun in the world, and perfectly safe; for if one did tumble the snow was too soft for a dangerous fall. The snow slope passed, we hit again the broken shale. Here also it was safe to hit up speed. In a descent on loose shale, broken small, one can stride five feet and slide ten. It is decidedly rough on the knees: but you only find that out the next day, and camp is ahead—and supper. It has been a far cry back to breakfast. Some one guessed a two-hour climb—it was ten. The willows and alders once more. The forget-me-nots—but who can forget a day like this, above—far above—the soil and moil of a work-a-day world?

Many the riskful climbs with hair-breadth escapes that have been depicted to give us thrills in the throat and creepy feelings—purely psychological creeps, of course—at the roots of the hair. This was an easy one. Maybe it wasn't worth recording.

CHAPTER III

YOHO, MY LADS, YOHO!

The discovery of the Yoho. Its circuit afoot. Balsam and sentiment. Takkakkaw. The high trail. Twin Falls. Wapta Glacier. Dead and living glaciers. A glacier grotto. The dash down the valley. A dangerous crossing. The Ravens of Elijah. And so, to camp.

No; this chapter is not of the sea, despite its heading, nor of those who go down to the sea in ships. Yet there is in it the ceaseless roar of living waters beating upon gray rocks; there is the break and rending of torrents into their ultimate physical components of drop and spindrift and spray, and there are as lovely rainbows in the floating mist as ever charmed a sailor's eye.

The Vale of Kashmir is famed in song and story. The Vale of Chamounix is known around the world. But when Thomas Wilson, now living in the mountain resort of Banff, some forty years ago, after a hard climb across the talus of Michael's Peak, near the head of Emerald Lake, and through the pine forest of the Wapta Saddle, reached a dizzy precipice and peered over the brink, he had become in that moment the discoverer of a valley that for beauty and magnificent grandeur rivals any other cleft in the Earth's enduring framework. He had given to the world one of its perpetual joys, if it be indeed true that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." The Yoho Valley is one

of those spots of condensed and crowded splendors that a Creator lavish in gifts of loveliness seems to have placed in the world to gladden the eye and to uplift the soul until it merges in its exaltation with the world-soul itself, and understands and falls into sympathy with the processes of a world in the making here visible in all their resistlessness. The Indian eloquently named the valley Yoho, "the Marvelous."

That the Yoho Valley cannot adequately be described is almost axiomatic. The description has often been attempted, but no word-pigment has magic enough to paint the Yoho. However, one crowded day of glorious life on the Yoho trails earns a place in any record of trail experience. We were lovers of the Yoho, we three—the Oread, Indian Rosemary, and I, and we had planned a visit of farewell. This visit was to be really a bit of the strenuous life, for we had determined to attempt the circuit of the Yoho twixt dawn and dark. Now a circuit of the Yoho involves some thirty miles of mountain trail work of the first order, including variations of level totaling something over 12,000 feet. I refer, of course, to the sum of the various climbs and descents, no one of which will greatly exceed 3,000 feet. The task, it is needless to say, is not to be essayed by the weak of limb, by the faint of heart, nor by one whose lungs cannot be relied upon to supply abundant oxygen to the pulsing blood. But to the Oread had been given the lithe frame and true spirit of the old Greek nymphs of the mountain, and the Indian fitted her sobriquet even as her own tailored gowns fit her in the less favored regions of her urban home. Talk of the decadence of the twentieth century woman. Nonsense!

It was gray dawn when three figures, sleepily yawning, crept forth from three silk tents and looked anxious looks at the sky. Pale blue it shone over the black steeps towering above Emerald Lake from the east and south; but we knew that beyond those barrier walls the far horizon gleamed delicately in orange-pink presaging a fair day for the climb. The beautiful lake lay in deep shadow, and the pines clustered blackly on the slopes beyond it until they faded out to dull rock at timber line. The formidable Burgess, towering menacingly across the lake before us, with four thousand feet of perpendicular cliff overhanging the placid water, was just taking off his pyjamas, and they gathered mistily about his knees. To the right the splendid snow fields of Vaux and the Chancellor gave back the glow of the unclouded east and were mirrored in inverted glory from the absolutely still surface of the lake. These marvelous reflections can be seen only at earliest dawn. The coming light brings the breeze, as the sun changes the temperature of the air and the interchanging movement of the aerial strata begins; and with the faintest breath of air come the ripples, and the magic spell of the doubled scene is broken. The mirrors of the Red Gods become once more merely lakes of troubled icy waters.

A dash of this icy lake water sent an electric thrill of wakefulness through every fiber, and the teapot was soon merrily humming while the bacon spluttered its protests as it crisped in the pan. We hung a light lunch at our belts—prunes, hardtack and a slice of bacon. In a dash among the mountains never make your heart the slave of your stomach. Every ounce of superfluous weight was discarded, and with camera and

ice-axe only we sharply hit the trail along the lake. The glacial fill—more technically, torrent fan—at the head of the lake was quickly passed, with its tiny rills that would become dashing silt-laden streams in the afternoon when the sun played on the glacier above, and we were well up the tortuous trail along the talus to the Wapta saddle ere the sun's rays struck the face of the Burgess cliff and leaped across the depression in which the green lake is set like its namesake gem to the darkly timbered foothills between the Emerald and Keewatinok Rivers and the distant wall of the Van Horne Range, jagged and battlemented, and the commanding pyramid of King. Nearer gleamed in the morning light snow-clad McMullin and Emerald Peak, sharp as a needle, parted by the hanging, blue-crevassed Emerald Glacier from the President and Michael's Peak. It was startling to see from this great height how much of the former lake bed was filled in with the product of the glacier's activity. Evidently in bygone geologic ages a monster river of glacial ice had plowed out the entire vast furrow now occupied, after the glacier's steady recession with the passing of the ice age, by the torrent fan and the lake beyond it. The configuration of the distant lake, nearly square with a great bay at each corner, called forth from one uninspired and unæsthetic soul the comment, "Looks like a coon's skin stretched out down there." The ceaseless march and endless grind of the Emerald Glacier will ultimately transform the lovely lake into a plain of glacier-worn cobble stones cemented in hardened silt. But to accomplish this sad certainty will probably require at least five thousand

years. We reflected on this, and it comforted us indescribably.

Higher and higher we climbed, the bright sunshine now pouring hotly down through the rarefied upper air. It was a relief to enter the dense timber of the saddle and to drink of the icy flow of its many springs. Balsams clustered thick overhead, making the air almost heavy with their sweet restful perfume. A balsam tree has a personality. You instinctively credit balsam with an almost maternal power of lulling you to sleep when you stretch your weary limbs upon a pile of its resilient boughs. And when one really knows how to build a balsam bed, with the butts of the branches carefully built in under the thatch of soft fronds, it is the most comfortable couch in the world. And then the trees are so beautiful.

"I almost hate to cut balsam boughs for my bed," mused Rosemary, "they have such a right to live."

"So have you," was the practical answer, "and yours is the right of the fittest, to be ministered to by the less fit."

This is true and logical: but truth and logic are ruthless, and our noble forests have fallen before them. Happily this beautiful forest is safe forever by national law—save possibly for some fool careless camper or, more rarely, for lightning. Rich mosses clothed the earth beneath the trees. The golden stars of the dog-tooth violets spangled the slopes, and here and there rankly grew masses of tall, lush hellebore with pale green spikes of bloom. Now Summit Lake shone glimmeringly through the trees, its transparent waters of pale peridot green revealing every stone and water-soaked branch in its depths. To the right rose the

dome of Wapta, adding five thousand feet of majesty to the six thousand at which the lake lies. From this point Wapta appears as a perfect hemispherical dome looking exceedingly easy of ascent, though it is of the most difficult. We climbed to the left, up the side of Angle Peak, and soon topped the timber line, coming out on a smooth grassy slope which rapidly merges above into a formidable talus, then into solid cliff and snow.

As we drew above the tree tops an involuntary cry of delight broke from the throat of each. The peerless Yoho was before us, deep carven in the eternal hills. For nearly thirty-five hundred feet the gorge falls away clear to the valley floor. Across the valley gleams the giant Daly glacier issuing from a mighty snowfield, pierced to right and left by huge black peaks, and stretching away, away, away, beyond the Wahputiks, to give birth there to that cataract of ice, the Bow Glacier, and to Bow Lake and the river of the awful muskegs.

I can conceive of nothing outside of the Himalayas grander than the view across the Yoho Valley from the point at which we had arrived. True, there are higher mountains than these; but on the roof of the world why stop to think of the few chimney stacks that rise above it? In the Canadian Rockies latitude and altitude work together for magnificence of glaciation. Opposite, across the valley's green depths, Daly pierces with its black sugarloaf a vast field of snow, the *névé* of the Daly Glacier. The wonderful mass of viscous, slow-flowing ice, in sharp blue contrast to the dazzling white of its parent snows, crowns the cliff that helps to wall in the Yoho and dips down

in two branches. The one to the left forms a formidable hanging glacier, avalanching often with the crash of cannon and known as the Minto Ice Cascade. The other branch pours into a glacier-bowl of astonishing dimensions. From the ice grotto at its foot issued a great gush of turbid water carrying in suspension the powdery detritus of the very girders of the Earth's frame, the "exceeding small" grindings of the Mills of the Gods. It is Takkakkaw, another bit of poetic Indian nomenclature, "Behold how beautiful." The greenish flood, a river in volume, pours with terrific force from the glacier's mouth, plunges nearly three hundred feet to a shelf in the perpendicular wall of the precipice, gathers irresistible strength and then leaps wildly far out from the cliff, eleven hundred feet of sheer fall, to break to watery atoms on the talus below. The roar surges across the valley in mighty billows of sound. Rainbows gleam in graceful arches when the sunshine plays on the whirling clouds of misty spray: or if, happily, a strong gale be blowing down the valley from Wapta glacier at its head, the splendid column of water slowly, majestically oscillates—right, left; right, left—a Titanic pendulum beating the slow seconds of geologic time. It has been my fortune to see this wonderful cataract under all conditions, at flood in blazing sunlight, a curtain of gale-blown spray, and beating time as a gigantic metronome through blinding clouds of driving snow. Such glimpses of cosmic energy are thrilling. Two of the mightiest geological forces, ice and water, were at work there before our eyes, tearing away, rending, destroying, to build in the waste again a thousand miles away. And unmoved by the processes of a world



Photo by H. C. Petersen.

Cloud Shadows on Burgess. (See p. 15.)



Takkakkaw, seen across the Yoho Valley. (See p. 28.)

in the making, a brown-and-gold butterfly, living its tiny span in joy, poised feasting upon a blue erigeron at the cliff's brink and slowly waved its lustrous wings. Happy little butterfly, unlearned to read the lesson of it all.

We paused to feast our eyes on the overwhelming grandeur. At our back towered Wapta, altered in shape with the change of angle, and even more impressive with the added distance; then the maze of peaks beyond the Kicking Horse, dominated by the spires and pinnacles and gargoyles of the Cathedral. Ahead, the valley, walled in, forested, framed in snow and ice; and there, too, could be seen the Little Yoho entering the greater valley from the left, and beyond it the Isolated Peak rising like a black pillar from a white glacial sea which entirely surrounds it.

But there was no time even for wonder, if Yoho was to be traversed in a day. We marched on upon a steep and treacherous moraine, the leavings of a huge glacier of ages past reaching clear down to Takkakaw's foot, but now shrunken to a point a few hundred feet above us, whence torrents of varying volume dashed down to make uncertain footholds more uncertain still and to sweep to annihilation him who slips in crossing them. These streams formed an interesting study; some crystal clear from the melting snows, some turbid with glacial silt. The birth record of each was written on its bosom. One had cut for itself a perfect staircase and bounded from step to step for a thousand feet. The moraine once passed, the going became easier, and we traversed a beautiful Alpine meadow bordering the President moraine with its wealth of rare rock crystals. These treeless

meadows of the heights are a delight, always starred with flowers and luxuriant grasses, and here we walked through beds of crimson painted cups and feathery tufts of the 'mice,' the fluffy heads of the seeding pulsatilla, and there were gardens of dense purple erigeron, and orange and crimson columbine and rich clusters of digitalis, suggestive of heart failure; and bluebells were there ringing their chimes in the wind, and the polished gold of buttercup petals glistened in the sunshine. Here also, far above the conifers, we found willows dwarfed by the great altitude. One towering specimen, full two inches tall, boasted two perfect catkins. We dropped again sharply toward timber line, reading as we ran life history in Nature's open book. Look at that gnarled pine a few feet in height. It is of millennial age, and four distinct bends mark its twisted stem. Do not pass it in contempt as a mere crooked stick: read in those bends the history of four avalanches and recovery after each crushing blow. See those two main roots, knotted and grown together: it is a plain tale of the hills, sympathetic attraction in scant soil, a case of malnutrition. Soon we descended into the dense forests hiding Yoho Lake, a wonderfully blue lake of icy water, in the form of an hour-glass. It is a sizable lake, as these mountain tarns go, yet its inlet and outlet are but a few yards apart. We sped on down the trail, for among the dense trees there was no temptation to stop and look, and the trail demanded close attention, seeing that it led now over rocks, now in decayed vegetable mold, now in muskeg, and again in the stickiest of mud. Then came Shadow Lake, whose water resembles *café noir*, and we climbed along its

shore on snow twenty feet deep, filled with twisted trunks, a remnant of the great avalanche of the late winter. A sharp ascent through bottomless mud tried the heart and temper; but the game was worth the candle, for as we made a quick turn and clambered over a great broken ledge, we came face to face with the Twin Falls.

Overpoweringly magnificent as Takkakkaw is, for ravishing beauty and delicate loveliness it must yield the palm to this exquisite cataract. Side by side, over eight hundred feet of sheer wall enclosing an amphitheater adorned in green and gray, these two falls leap separately into space, to mingle below, under billows of spray, in a torrent that dashes with hiss and roar through a frightful gorge to join the Yoho River in the valley's floor. No living creature could survive that terrible rush for a second; and as we follow on down to the gorge's narrowest point, the Chine, where the rock walls crowd to within four feet of each other, and from a boulder of uncertain balance watch the boil and surge and anger of the flood, we feel a wholesome fear of the power of maddened water and instinctively shrink away from the foaming cauldron close against the rock.

"We must reach the glacier foot by two o'clock," announces the Oread, "or night will overtake us in the valley."

That was a contingency not to be thought of; for besides the fact that we were after a record—the circuit of the Yoho in a day—we carried neither food nor blankets. Forward! past Heather Lake, a mere pond in size but very beautiful, shallow and shelving near the shore and deepening to an abysmal depth,

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a huge blue-black hole, at the center but a dozen yards away. It seemed almost like an ancient flooded crater, although there are no traces of volcanic action in this part of the mountains. The trail still lay in deep forest. Spring beauties grew along the path, and an occasional solitary, deliciously fragrant *moneses* or a gorgeous Calypso orchid. If orchids suggest the tropics, reflect that nine species of them grow here in the forest of the north. Black toads blinked solemnly at us and scrambled awkwardly out of the way. These Yoho toads haven't the good healthy jump that our own "hop-toad" employs to take himself out of harm's way; with them it is one leg at a time, and that painfully, as if the long winters had given them all rheumatism. But there are compensations in life, even for a rheumatic toad. Yoho is a toad's paradise; there isn't a snake in the valley.

A heart-breaking pull up the roughest of trails, a tangle of roots in slippery mud, brought us to the last descent over the crest of the moraine to the mighty Wapta glacier, the head of the Yoho. We sat down to eat our scant lunch and to try fully to appreciate the splendor of that resistless river of ice flowing down from the Wahputik Ice Field and broken into the frozen waves of infinite crevasses. Then we drew courage for a near approach to the monster. Like nearly all the glaciers of the region—the Wenkchemna Glacier, above the head of Moraine Lake, is the sole exception—it has receded appreciably in recent time. The Ice Age is giving up the long struggle. The huge moraine is now far in advance of the glacier foot.

Grand and impressive as are these dying glaciers, nothing on earth, saving only, I imagine, a volcanic

eruption, can give the conception of irresistible cosmic force in action as completely as a living and advancing glacier. The Wenkchemna thrusts its mighty snout forward like a huge plowshare, cutting under the earth and rock before it, lifting bodily acres of solid land, piling enormous morainal boulders on its icy surface and thrusting others aside from its chosen path. Great trees it lifts entire, earth, root and anchoring rock. They can be seen in all stages of tottering death, erect, leaning, fallen, on the dirt-hidden face of the advancing ice. The periodicity of glaciers is one of the unexplained phenomena of nature. The Wenkchemna itself, the great glacier that dug out Moraine Lake and furrowed along the base of the Ten Peaks, had its own period of recession and decline lasting into recent years. But the giant has awakened and none can tell where or when it will end its unconquerable march. Some day, of course, may come a glacial resurrection in the Yoho; and the Wapta, the Daly, and all the rest of the Titans may resume their warfare against the face of the earth and the framework of the hills.

But what a moraine this on which we sat! It has not had time to decompose, as has the one crossed earlier in the day; but its component stones, from rocks the size of a house to pebbles the size of a pea, are cemented together by the hardened detritus into a solid conglomerate barrier, to be surmounted with much testing of foothold and steadiness of head.

From the yawning cavernous mouth of the monster—the grotto, in technical phrase—a vaulted chamber over fifty feet in height, with rain of melting drops falling incessantly from its roof, springs the Yoho River, born of the heat developed by the friction of

millions of tons of ice on rock, and a flood at its very birth, rolling beneath its swift waters great stones whose ceaseless grind strikes the ear continuously, and sweeping away great masses of clear blue ice as hundreds of tons avalanche from time to time from the roof of the grotto, blue in its depths as lapis lazuli though the bright sun has decomposed the outer surface into white pencil-like crystals. As the glacier crawls and curves down from the ice field and opens its yawning mouth, it seems almost a perilous bravado to draw near it and chip off with our ice-axes bits of the clear ice to quench our thirst. Only a Siegfried should dare a challenge to this reptilian Fafner. But the thirsty in our day dare worse than this; so we chipped ice and were refreshed. We entered the grotto; and oh, the divinely blue radiance that filters through roofs and walls of these glacier grottoes when one stands in them with a brilliant sun pouring down floods and oceans of light upon the crystal roofs!

But time was passing—a bad habit it has—and the sun was already aslant as we left the glacier for the homeward dash. The trail down the valley floor was easy, and we set a hot pace, lingering only to look for a while at Laughing Fall, whose laughter is of the most boisterous, and to waste some precious minutes over a brood of beautiful little grouse and their distracted mother, who lost her timidity entirely when we caught several of her downy chicks, and flew in our faces in frantic efforts to effect a rescue.

The day had been hot, and on hot days the glaciers work with energy and glacial streams rise rapidly, often dangerously. The ugly thought of crossing that Yoho River would not down. A large log jam near

the foot of Takkakkaw ordinarily afforded a somewhat precarious monkey-bridge: but to-day? The question was soon answered, for we came out upon the river and it was rushing along greenish and chill, with the nasty swish that only glacial rivers can acquire. It was roaring over the log jam in earnest, and the great logs were bobbing tipsily in its sweep. We looked at each other somewhat blankly. To retrace our steps was unthinkable. The Oread, game to the death, took off her shoes and stockings, rolled up her knickers and essayed the dangerous feat. By a marvelous feat of equilibristism on slippery logs that swayed with the rush of the waters and with her own trifling weight, she made the crossing, and at once called back not to dare to risk it, as it was only a lucky accident that she was where she was. Thanks were due to Heaven for the accident, but we had no time to offer them up. It was "one wide river to cross" for the two others of us—maybe Jordan. A few hundred yards above the log-jam the sweep of the water in choppy little dancing wavelets showed a shallower channel—it is one of the tasks of woodcraft to locate a practicable ford by the character of currents. No human being could swim in that icy flood, but in this spot it was barely possible that its fierce rush would not sweep us off our feet. While the Indian bared her feet, not in any hope of a shallow crossing but to have dry footgear for the remaining hike which included a three thousand foot climb, if we succeeded in crossing, the third member of the trio reconnoitered somewhat carefully. By the entangled Ram of Moriah! There lay a rope! Bless the luck of the rider that lost it, and bless the luck also that made

the Yoho Valley floor accessible to horses from the Field side in its lower reaches. I tied the rope about the Indian's waist and gripped it tightly, also keeping on my hob-nailed boots, for I dared not risk slipping. In we plunged, gasping involuntarily as the chilling water rose on our limbs. It was parlous going with the wild current swirling about us and our footing a bed of water-worn cobble stones. Leaning up stream against our alpenstocks, feeling carefully for foothold among the rolling stones, we crossed inch by inch, not daring to hurry. Higher and higher rose the water on our bodies. Stronger and stronger grew the press of the flood. That step took us above the waist. The next? It was taken. Shallower! Thank our stars! We were assured of our crossing; wet, icy cold, but safe.

A long steep climb in soaked garments and in breezes fresh blown from the everlasting ice is a questionable pleasure, to say the least. But on the other side of the great mountain wall lay camp—and hot tea. Not a pause for breath was taken as we toiled up the zig-zag trail. It was a silent climb: we were too much in earnest even to talk. The forest closed around us darkly. Rivulets rippled across the trail; we splashed through them. One of us at least couldn't get any wetter; and there are stages in discomfort which are beyond precaution. We came out at last panting into the open spaces at the base of Wapta's dome, where the winter avalanches from that towering peak allow no tree to find foothold. Summit Lake once more, and our trail of the early morning. But we are still a far cry from camp and we dash ahead in the fast gathering twilight. What is this? A package neatly

wrapped, by the wayside. The Indian rushed on past it. She's a woman; but she hadn't curiosity enough just then to look into that bundle. No Pandora's Box for her! The Oread investigated with a chuckle of delight.

"Ham sandwiches, by all that's lovely! *Now* how about the Ravens of Elijah?"

A horseback party of "swell loafers," as the genuine mountaineer dubs the casual tourist, had been at the Wapta saddle and his blessed package of superfluous lunch had been tossed thoughtlessly away. Glory be that we reached the spot before the porcupines! Munching each a sandwich—nor were there ever better—we raced down the mountain, across the torrent fan of the lake and along the shore trail in the gathering gloom of the evening. The radiant glow of the camp fire on its Druid's altar was indeed a welcome sight as, after sixteen hours of hard hiking, we strode into camp as briskly as we strode out of it in the pale dawn.

There was a yell of welcome, but our answering cry was, "Tea!"

CHAPTER IV

THE SELKIRKS OF THE BIG BEND

Precipitation in the Selkirks. Packing for the wild. Provisioning. Romance of the Revelstoke Trail. Mosquitoes. The steamboat. Negotiating rapids on the upward trip. Turn-ross and his thirst. Wonderful timber. Raspberries. Fire warnings. Prospecting. Night in the open. Porcupines and whiskers. The Standard Trail. Alpine parkland. Making camp. Need of adequate food. "Small deer." Goats and getting them. The Standard cabin. The climb of Mount Morris. The Blueberry Pie. Robinson's exploit. Flowers. Hummingbirds and snowflakes. Back to the river. The skid-wagon. The Grindstone Cabin. Shooting the canyon rapids.

THE era of breaking-in was over. We were fit to the minute, lungs and hearts well used to the altitude, muscles hardened, senses alert, and all of us supposed to be dependable—more or less—on a climb. Camp was broken, and the last ceremony of farewell was an extremely acrobatic scalp-dance, to the accompaniment of shrill and blood-curdling yells, executed by a distinguished professor who interprets, in his more serious moments, the laws of the mechanical powers and of the universe generally to the reluctant youth of one of America's great universities. Our fitness was to be thoroughly tested by an expedition among the high peaks of the Selkirk Range in the little known region of the upper Big Bend country. The Selkirk Mountains lie enclosed by the vast sweep of the Columbia River northward from its source in the

Windermere Lakes and again, after a sharp turn, abruptly southward. The immediate object of the expedition was scientific: researches into the influence of the superabundant moisture of the Selkirks upon their vast tangle of vegetation and upon timber line. For the Selkirks catch and squeeze dry the moist, warm winds from the Japan current, and their jungles are of tropic luxuriance and impenetrability. There are valleys in the Selkirk Range where the normal winter's snowfall is fifty feet. The expedition was to start from Revelstoke, into which our train pulled some four hours late in pitchy darkness and in an all-pervading sample of the aforesaid superabundant Selkirk moisture. There was everything to do and no time in which to do it. The contents of trunks had to be reduced to back-packs by a process of selective exclusion, for the edict had gone forth, "Fifty pounds of personal baggage each." Now when fifty pounds of personal baggage is interpreted to include bedding and a small silk tent, one must select very carefully indeed and discard with a freedom only just short of recklessness. The question to be asked regarding many a prized possession is not, "Will it add to my comfort?" but, "Can I possibly do without it?" Let me give here a brief hint as to equipment and supplies. Your absolute minimum of equipment for a *real* wilderness expedition will consist, preferably of blouse and trousers (no matter what your sex) of loden or forestry cloth, which are as nearly waterpoof as fabrics can be made, the blouse having as many pockets as a game coat. Underwear and stockings must be wholly of wool. The footgear is of vital importance, for when the feet of a marcher give out, for him purgatory

is beginning. The boots must be of the best quality obtainable, regardless of expense, laced to just below the knee, waterproof, and plentifully hob-nailed for mountain work, and do not forget extra raw-hide laces. From one extremity we'll pass to the other: a duxbak hat is best; also provide a rubber fishing cap with cape. An absolute necessity also is a rubber slip-on fishing shirt for use in downpours and wet underbrush. You must have a heavy canvas ground cloth, woven waterproof, about six feet square on which you build your bed at night and in which you pack your belongings by day. Carry an extra suit of underwear, half a dozen extra pairs of stockings, including one pair of lumberman's socks for sleeping. There must be scissors, thread, needles, safety pins of all sizes, buttons, copper wire and copper rivets for all imaginable repairs, and a ball of medium-laid seine cord. Bedding should consist of a down quilt, denim-covered and blanket-lined, fashioned into a sleeping bag, and an extra warm dark blanket. You may also take a collapsible pillow, and if you are very persnickety, an air mattress. These last are undeniably comfortable, adapting themselves to every curve of the body; but they are very cold and will require at least one extra blanket under the sleeper. They are better adapted to pack-train travel than to back-packing. You must have cuffed leather riding gauntlets, black chiffon head nets for protection against the black flies and the thrice-cursed mosquitoes, a belt axe (*not* hatchet) in its sheath, a pair of cutter-pliers, a few damp-proof food bags, a cheap watch, a compass, and, above all, a waterproof match box. I emphasize the match box. One may easily fall into a situation in the

wilderness where a dry match will save from hideous discomfort or even a miserable death. It will be observed that I have not mentioned tooth brush, comb, soap and towels. Certainly not. I have merely assumed that no sane human being would go anywhere without them. And there is your photographic outfit. "Costly thy camera as thy purse can buy;" and plenty of films, certainly allow not less than one hundred and twenty-five exposures for each month of projected wilderness travel. A waterproof camera case is an absolute necessity. There must also be a quarter-inch Manila rope for tying up your pack, and, if you must carry your pack, an old pair of trousers for pack harness. The legs are passed upward under the upper cross rope of your pack, then folded forward over the shoulders and under the arms and are tied to the lower cross rope of the pack. The leg can be spread out to cover the shoulder like a cap and pull it back, thereby really aiding respiration and avoiding entirely the cruel shoulder cut of any other pack harness I have ever seen. And if, by reason of circumstances beyond your control, you don't own trousers, borrow shamelessly from your masculine friends. Now if I have omitted anything really necessary, you'll discover the omission in the wilds and can make a note to provide it on your next trip.

The food to be carried must be most carefully considered. All the food required on the trip must go with you on pack horses; for you are going to the "wilderness and the solitary place," and you dare not rely on the country for anything. True, you may find trout and game. You probably will. But if you permit that probability to influence you to reduce your estimate of

supplies, you are risking your life. Believe me, 'tis a serious feeling that comes over one while eating the last spoonful of food far from the base camp. *I know.* A safe estimate of quantity is from three to four pounds of food *per capita per diem*; and let it be four rather than three. On this particular expedition the leader recklessly estimated one pound, a quantity utterly inadequate. Violent exercise at high altitudes "takes it out of" one tremendously: the engine needs plenty of fuel and fiercely craves it. The inadequacy of the supply was shown in this instance by the fact that, though in perfect health, I lost forty-two pounds in six weeks. I registered a solemn oath that never again would I venture into the silent places with an expedition organized by any one other than myself.

The food to be taken by such an expedition divides itself sharply into two categories: necessities and luxuries. The necessities are bacon, flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, tea, rice, army beans, prunes, raisins, hard-tack; and of these necessities take sufficient to cover a full week of possible delay in schedule. The luxuries should be calculated to the day. They may include erbswurst, for a hasty and nutritious soup in vile weather, tinned corned beef, sardines, "doggies"—if anyone pretends he doesn't know that these are Frankfurter sausages, don't believe him—"baker's egg," a dehydrated egg product, useful for extra-fancy baking when there's time for it; a fair supply of those wonderful Alberta onions, mild and juicy as an apple, the one touch of green food so earnestly craved; condensed cream, butter in tins, cheese, canned corn, tomatoes and fruit in limited quantity. Canadian gastronomy owes to Wagstaffe a debt akin

to that which English literature owes to Shakespeare: take a supply of Wagstaffe's incomparable preserves. Add some marshmallows to toast around the tipi fire, and anything else your purse permits or your whim dictates. But these extras add heavily to weight and to expense, for they must be carried, and every extra pack horse means extra dollars not a few. Of course, there is no limit to what you *can* take, if you are rich enough and foolish enough. I have even seen a crate of eggs safely packed on the trail. *Re* eggs: from the last dozen of this same crate the Indian concocted a marvelously beautiful omelet. Its complexion was beyond cosmetics. But that morning the wind was vagrant and shift. The omelet traveled up-table at arm's length. The Indian mourned in accents of grief and with misty eyes:

"Won't someone have a piece of my omelet? There were two good eggs in it!"

I once was asked in all seriousness by a fair tender-foot if we did not always carry a crate of live chickens. Those that we had with us were not crated.

A few bouillon cubes and some somatose chocolate in your personal pack may keep off the pangs of hunger in an emergency, and a kola nut to gnaw will give a fictitious strength for hours, with no unpleasant reaction.

We packed and hustled till one of the early morning clock, threw ourselves down for an uneasy rest and were called at three-fifteen. Query: were we sweet-tempered? We piled ourselves and our packs into a wagon in the gray, cold, clammy dawn for a six-mile drive around Revelstoke Canyon, at this season un-navigable, where the greenish white glacial river

roared and writhed and dealt death to those who ventured on its raging current. We hadn't had a bite to eat, but fed on our respective grouches. Mine furnished a feast. I do not remember ever having been so utterly disagreeable, and at least one other person says she agrees with me. It was a hair-raising drive. The road was what was left of the old Revelstoke Trail of gold fever fame. The trail is ruined now and broken throughout the canyon; but it is a pathway of story and travail and tragedy. In the old days the lure of gold drew hundreds to Downie Creek and Smith Creek and even beyond, to the Surprise Rapids and the broad treacherous Tinbasket. Placer camps flourished there, and all that goes with them—the criminal, the card sharp, the vendor of "hooch," and the vampires of the painted cheek and powdered nose. Banjo and guitar twanged from the low dance halls; but one of them grew ambitious. A piano it must have. So the packers at Revelstoke lashed a piano between two long poles, and the poles were lashed to the pack saddles, the cayuses walking between as in shafts. Then the news of the Klondike miracle flashed into Revelstoke and men went mad in a twinkling. Gold! Gold! A rider dashed up the trail yelling to all whom he saw the astonishing news. The packers of the piano heard. The fever caught their blood and brains. They cut the lashings, mounted their cayuses and galloped back to Revelstoke for a wild dash to the land of the golden lure. The piano lies rotting in the Devil's Clubs to this day. The mines were deserted and gold in the Big Bend of the Columbia is now little more than a memory.

This extraordinary trail stuck to *terra firma* as

closely as possible. But when the very foundations of things rested edgewise, it was bracketed out into space on obliquely planted timbers, and the trail-bed was corduroyed; while beneath it the Columbia, icy and sullen, boiled and hissed.

The gray had brightened into day when we drew rein at Mosquito Landing. They were there, too, big as gallinippers and savage as tigers. On the way up, as I fought the swirling multitudes, I expressed some rather violent sentiments concerning them. The driver seemed really aggrieved.

"This isn't many mosquitoes," said he.

"What do you call many?" I countered.

"When I can't see my team!"

These terrible northern mosquitoes make the famed "Jersey skeeter" seem few and far between and feel like a balm in comparison. They waste no time in preliminary buzzing and singing, but they dart at you bill first and begin to bite. Pull one loose and set her down gently elsewhere on your superficial anatomy, and she resumes her interrupted meal with cheerful nonchalance. Note the "her" and "she." Males never bite. Heaven bless them! Surely 'twas a Columbia River mosquito that inspired Kipling to write his famous poem. I have seen them stalk solemnly over the back of a leather gauntlet prospecting for stitch-holes; and, when found, bore through them with the enthusiasm of an oil driller. I am sure that, had one single visitation of Columbia River mosquitoes been sent upon Pharaoh, the first born of Egypt would have been spared and the first Zionist excursion would have started some months earlier than it did. Vergil and Dante both essayed descriptions of hell

and its torments, yet among these they never mentioned the mosquito. There is, however, one mitigating circumstance about these pests in the mountain regions: they do not bite at night. At sunset, with the first chill of the frosty gales from off the snows, they vanish to shiver and plot till the dawn, and you hie yourself in supreme content to the grateful glory of the camp fire.

Chilled, starved, mosquito-bitten, till our complexions resembled a mince pie with the lid off, we boarded the little stern-wheeled steamboat which, under government subsidy, plied the Columbia between Revelstoke and the Big Bend country, to carry supplies to the one or two placer mines still being worked. We had a passenger list small but motley: timber cruisers, prospectors, trappers, adventurers of all sorts, obeying the call from "beyond the ranges" at the modest rate of twenty-five cents a mile. For maximum of charge with minimum of service commend me to the government-operated lines of communication. The boat nosed out into the swirl, and we felt that we had reached the fabled "jumping-off place" and had jumped. The *Revelstoke* was a powerful little craft with wood-burning furnaces, specially designed for her dangerous work, and commanded by a calm, silent, blue-eyed giant, Forslund by name, said to be the only man in British Columbia unafraid and with the requisite skill to navigate her in these treacherous waters. It is, I believe, the crowning bit of river navigation on the continent, a continuous battle with dashing waves and fierce cross-current in a rock-bound bed where the mad rush, reflection and rebound of the tremendous volume of water piles it to mid-stream,

so that the level there is visibly higher than at the banks. Many of the rapids are too swift to allow steerage-way in the ascent. Then inshore the staunch little craft turns her bow. A grating and scraping of the flat bottom tells that she is aground. Half a dozen men leap ashore with a stout hawser, toil up the bank a hundred yards or more and make fast to a stout tree. The engine reverses; the boat scrunches off the rocks; the big capstan winds in the hawser, and the boat slowly pulls herself to the tree. Then the whole performance is repeated until the rapid is passed. The force of the current in this stretch of the river is unbelievably great. A few days before our arrival a lumberman, one of the daring canoemen of the north, was poling his canoe up-stream at Carnes Creek, where the swift glacial tributary has built out a pebble bar into the main river. Just as he reached safety his pole slipped and the canoe overturned in eighteen inches of water. Unfortunately he fell outboard instead of toward shore. Half a dozen of his companions, standing on shore, dashed out in a human chain and seized the canoe, but the tremendous current broke the strong man's grip on the gunwale, and he was swept away and drowned.

As the boat toiled up the river snow-capped peaks and glacier-seamed ranges began to give us tantalizing glimpses of themselves through occasional breaks in the densely-timbered foothills along the river. We were wondering now about our chances of reaching this promised land, for arrangements had been made with a packer, a certain Turnross, to meet us along the river with a pack-train to transport the equipment and supplies up the long difficult Standard Trail into

the Standard Basin. This was to be our base for a month, with side expeditions afoot with back-packs. But no packer was visible, and there was grave reason to fear that we had been victimized, when at a bend in the channel a man was seen gesticulating and frantically waving his hat from a 'sweeper,' a fallen tree reaching out from shore into the current. Any place is a landing place on this voyage; so the accommodating boat swung in to the shore and took aboard our packer, his beautiful horse and a black dog of marked personal characteristics.

"Where's the pack train, Turnross? You promised to have sixteen cayuses for us, and here's only one."

But Turnross is so drunk that he doesn't know. He was immediately set upon by the disreputable mob aboard, who, in the effort to get his horse away from him, plied him with additional hooch until all memory of promises and responsibilities faded from him and he faded from conscious existence.

Far up in the wilderness, at White's Cabin Landing, the foot of the Standard Trail, the boat poked her nose ashore again, and we gingerly "walked the plank"—and a narrow shaky one it was—to solid ground. Then we dragged ashore the innumerable bags, bales and boxes, and Turnross himself, while the nucleus of the pack train and the black dog followed, the dog assuming general supervision of the horse, of his master, now dead to the world, and of all his master's goods. The sun had appeared through a break in the Selkirk clouds and poured hotly down on our laboring selves and on the prostrate Turnross. The times called for heroic measures. I dragged him into the sunniest space of all, searched him for hooch

and consigned my numerous and potent finds to the rushing Columbia. Then I got a rubber blanket and spread it over him in the blazing sun, carefully shutting off all air and ventilation. The dog, Nigger by name, looked in disapproval at our familiarity with his master, and made many a snarling show of teeth. Actual hostilities, however, were avoided. Two hours of this Turkish bath treatment followed, and out from under that blanket crawled a chastened packer, sober as a Prohibition congressman and the limpest, weakest human being in British Columbia. It was comical to see his immediate and earnest search for the sustaining fluid and his bitter chagrin at his failure to find it. The sunshine cure had done its perfect work.

There would be no hitting the trail for the snowy Selkirks that day, at least; so we, in our secret hearts glad for the luxury of rest, made temporary camp under those marvelous trees. Mighty trees they were, the white cedar, towering a hundred and more feet into the air, straight as masts and interlocking their feathery crowns of fragrant foliage, the lacy, scented leafage of the true *arbor vitæ*. They were giants of ancient days, eight, ten, twelve feet in diameter. We measured one monster of forty-six feet in circumference. The lower vegetation was tropical in its luxuriance. The soil is the vegetable débris of ages, soft and springy as a costly mattress and clothed in a green tangle of rich growth, fed and nourished by the almost daily rains and mists. Orchids grew abundantly; most notable among them the splendid *habenaria*—the flower of the fairies—its magnificent spike of pale green bloom shooting up full three feet from a pair of dark green polished oval leaves. There were superb

banks of delicate waving ferns, higher than one's head, clothing the first risings of the mountain slopes. And back from the narrow flat fringing the river was the diabolical tangle of the devil's club, interlacing its wrist-thick running stems in a treacherous network half a foot above the ground, to trip the intruder and send him to torture as the sharp daggers of the poison-pointed thorns of its shoulder-high vertical shoots tore and pierced him as he fell: and all this treachery concealed by lovely foliage; broad, deeply slashed, handsome leaves like those of the castor bean.

On a bare slash on the mountain side near the landing was soon discovered a thicket of luscious wild red raspberries, large and juicy as the choicest cultivated fruit. Dinah and I volunteered to gather them for supper. Now Dinah was a gentle Quaker maiden, whose mild *tutoiement* was a delight to hear and from whose presence calm radiated like a benediction. We reached that thicket of raspberries, parted company and began to pick. Vergil tells of an elm tree in the lower world, under whose every leaf clung, bat-like, a horde of evil dreams. Under every leaf of those raspberry stalks clung a million mosquitoes who swarmed out in famished phalanx to their bloody feast. I fought them to the limit of patience (quickly reached) and beyond. Then, lost to sight of Dinah and, as I fondly thought, to hearing also, I breathed the earnest desire of my being:

"Damn the mosquitoes!"

Came a gentle voice from somewhere in the depths of the thicket:

"Friend Benjamin, will thee please say that again?"

With unction I repeated the pious wish.

"Thank thee: I feel better now," said the unseen voice.

Over the carefully guarded fire a fragrant supper was preparing as we brought back our hard-earned raspberries. I have already spoken of the dangers of fire in these vast coniferous forests. The terror of it is universal among all who know wilderness life; and many a warning and exhortation to care is heard and seen. On a broad white blaze cut in a great cedar near the cooking place was this inscription, written by some unknown prospector:

PLEASE BE CAREFUL OF FIRE AND BE SURE THE
FIRE IS ALL OUT BEFORE YOU LEAVE AND OBLIGE
Everybody.

And you may be sure that this injunction, with its queer mixture of lettering, was implicitly observed.

As we sat on the river bank in the twilight, smiling mockingly through our head nets at the mosquitoes and fighting the almost microscopic punkies who can go through even chiffon and bite like the touch of an electric point, a canoe, powerfully driven by two men, came up the river, barely making progress against the terrific current. It stopped at our impromptu camp and our visitors crawled up the bank with cheery greeting. It was Puffle, one of the "mighty men of valor" of the Columbia wilderness, a famous trapper and prospector, who, with a young companion, had come miles for a friendly call. Long we sat around the camp fire, that foster father of friendliness, and listened to fascinating tales of the wild. What a life these men lead, fighting the very forces of nature arrayed against them, and fighting, too, against the worst

enemy of all—loneliness. Alone in the winter woods, no accident *dare* happen. Then a man must be master of himself and of nature. And all this terrible risk to decorate milady's shoulders. They build a rough log cabin, cold and comfortless, for their base camp; and whenever the cabins can be reached by pack-horses, a stove is packed in and left permanently and also an axe. Every passing adventurer is expected to leave in the cabin as much firewood as he found there. This tacit obligation is never neglected. But the trappers are often days at a time away from their base, gambling on the weather. At night, on the trapping lines, they trust to finding a hollow cedar. This they cut down, and chop holes in the trunk about ten feet apart to create a draft. Then they kindle a fire in the hollow butt of the tree, sleeping on the trunk near the first hole for warmth. As the fire burns toward them the heat increases; and when it gets too hot, they move up another hole. All the medicinal herbs of the region they must know; Oregon grape and princess pine for the blood, foxglove (*digitalis*) for the heart at great altitudes. Their food must be well prepared and hot; hasty cold lunches may never be risked, and these wilderness men are famous cooks. Plenty of time must they take to care for their bodies. As Puffle phrased it: "When you get in a hurry, camp two days to rest and think it over." Blood poisoning from an injury is the ever-present horror. Puffle himself one season, camping above Smith Creek, cut his foot and soon, in spite of careful treatment, detected the dread symptoms. There was but one thing to do. Abandoning his outfit and the prospects of an entire season, he started for Revelstoke on snowshoes, his foot and leg

paining more terribly at each step. He fell in the river in his helplessness, but dragged himself out and pushed forward. He dared not stop nor sleep. After forty-two hours' unceasing struggle in terrible suffering, he fell unconscious into his own doorway in Revelstoke, his leg black to the knee. Wonderful to say, he recovered perfectly, an illuminating commentary on his splendid physique and clean life.

In our vast temple of the trees, with green-vaulted roof supported on mighty columns towering vague and mysterious in the dimness of the northern night, we slept in the open, soothed by the soft sibilant swish of the rushing river and by the crooning hum of myriad mosquitoes, a music which one can enjoy under a silk chiffon head net. It is such a satisfaction to circumvent the pests and to listen to their symphony of chagrin. Nights in the silent places have a charm all their own; and when one has confidence enough in the weather simply to build a deep balsam bed on one's ground cloth and to fasten another one overhead to ward off the possible drip of dew from overhanging foliage, the acme of nocturnal delight is attained. The idea of fear is an absurdity. Nowhere is one so safe; for man is the only creature in North America vicious enough to be dangerous when unmolested. True, one may be weakened by the *whoof!* of a startled bear as he ambles by to feast on berries; or one may turn uneasily as a porcupine walks across one's feet. But these are nothings. Far worse intruders are to be found in many a pretentious inn. Sometimes there is comedy in the wee sma' hours. Robinson Crusoe was wakened one night by a sense of oppression on his manly chest. Being a prudent man, he got himself

wide awake before moving: a twenty-pound porcupine was seated on his chest eating his precious whiskers. "I swore at him," said Robinson, "in seven languages, one of which he understood, for he left."

Morning and much excitement. Turnross had vanished. Was it conscience or craft? Two days of rest and raspberries passed. We repaired the trail up the mountain, explored many a charming glen and brook, and fought the mosquitoes, the punkies or "no-see-'ems," as the Indians call them—the full formula is "bite-'em-no-see-'em-damn-'em"—and the big green-eyed caribou flies, which the trappers say bite a piece out of you and buzz off to eat it on a rock. We looked blankly at each other, said things, and speculated. But on the third morning a distant barking thudded the air. It was Nigger, the black dog, escorting Turnross and the pack train; and we were soon trying to fathom the secrets of the diamond hitch, that wonderful, unyielding, complex tie that will not slip from bag and box and pack under the muscle-play of the cayuses. And, believe me, it is "blest be the tie that binds" when all you possess in your narrow world is balanced on a cayuse's back along the edge of a ticklish precipice.

Our dim trail into the heart of the Selkirks rose sharply from the river's brink, wild and rough. Fallen trees lay athwart it in tangle and confusion, moss-covered, lichen-grown, decaying. Some of these masses of windfall the patient, sure-footed cayuses clambered over, almost hidden under their mountainous burdens; some they climbed around, for a cayuse can go anywhere a man can go without using his hands; and some the axemen were forced to clear away. Wondrously

beautiful gorges cleft the mountain's side, a tumultuous dash of purest water roaring down each. Two trees were felled and laid across the narrow chasms parallel and about three feet apart. A corduroy was then laid upon them and held in place by two more logs. The cayuses stepped very gingerly over these improvised bridges, and I am sure some of the riders held their breath and gripped the saddle horn. The timber, while equally dense, grew steadily smaller as we rose, and the gulf below sank deeper and darker from us till it became an abyss down which we dared only steal furtive glances. The windings of the trail offered new surprises to the eye, and one memorable bend revealed through a gap in the forest the two enormous glaciers flanking the peak of the Frenchman's Hat, one of them structurally perfect with medial, lateral and terminal moraines fully developed. The two great ice rivers glittered gorgeously in the bright sunlight, the pure snow of the upper slopes set off by the blue ice of the steeper descents, where it gleamed out from serac and crevasse. Snowdrifts in sheltered nooks now told us of our increasing altitude; and along their edges, even sprouting through them, grew the beautiful heliotrope-scented valeriana, a luscious feast of fragrance, fairly intoxicating the sense. It grew in the utmost profusion, and so tall that we could lean from our saddles and pluck the lovely heads of bloom. The valeriana is one of the chief summer foods of the mountain caribou: no wonder that their flesh is the most delicious of all four-footed game.

The timber growth changed from continuous forest to groves and patches. We were nearing timber line.

Now opened before us one of those charming Alpine parks so characteristic of the Selkirks, though rarely seen in the Canadian Rockies proper. There was snow a-plenty. The cayuses waded to the knees in deep drifts of it. But between the snow patches what a riot of color! Pale pink and white heather, softly resilient to the tread; deep pink kalmia, the mountain laurel dwarfed by the great altitude to a petty six inches of stalk, but blooming with the rich lavishness of its six-foot cousin of the Appalachians. There shone the divine blue of the lupines. And then the painted cups! oriental carpets of them of every conceivable shade and gradation of red, from the richest crimson, through brilliant scarlet, to salmon pink and flesh tints. Tiny, exquisite bronze-backed humming birds, a species of the western hills, darted from flower to flower and poised on throbbing wings a foot before our faces, fearless and apparently fascinated by the brightness of the human eye. A weird, paradoxical sight it was on many an August day that followed, when blinding snow squalls swept across these blazing acres of bloom and the humming birds flitted undismayed through the whirling flakes like living jewels and sipped the sweetness of these painted cups of nectar.

The pack train halted on one of these flower-starred Alpine parks, a vast amphitheater with huge peaks towering on every hand, their glaciers and snow fields flashing in the rare Selkirk sunshine. A group of seven lovely little lakes, nestling, like gems deep set in rich enamel, in a flower-carpeted depression scooped out by some resistless glacier in ages long gone, was chosen for the base camp—the Camp of the Seven

Tarns. The lakes were near the brink of a great cliff, thousands of feet in sheer descent, over which their waters poured in wild cascades to the deep valley of the Downie roaring beneath, terrible, impassable. That poetical *tour de force*, the "Cataract of Lodore," comes nearer than anything else in the language to describing these irresistible, impetuous Selkirk torrents. Across that abyss, range beyond range, Pelion upon Ossa, were piled the Selkirk masses, wild, rugged, unexplored; while dominating the entire landscape rose many miles away the Selkirk's crowning glory, at that time unclimbed, unconquered and unknown, lifting its pure snowy head far into the sky above all its brother giants. We named it the White Elephant, a moniker which clung to it for several years. Now, thanks to the penchant of the Canadian Geographic Board for naming glorious mountains after mediocre humans, it is known as Mount Sir Sanford. Anticlimax!

Setting up housekeeping is a brief task in the wild. Our own mansion was a little balloon silk 'A' tent, with just room for two and so low that Nip had to kneel to dress her hair and to wriggle into her clothes. I met this inconvenience by crawling into my sleeping bag minus only coat and boots. When I made bold to suggest the same expedient to the writhing victim of a kneeling toilette, it was dismissed with indignation and finality. When masculine argument is met with, "I simply can't," I submit that the hour for silence has arrived. There is, however, no necessity whatever for such cramped quarters. The single-pole canoe model tent solves the problem perfectly, and was later adopted. And avoid oiled silk as you would a rattlesnake. One drifting brand from the camp fire, and

you may be homeless; and the least you may dread is a fine colander effect from flying sparks on the tent roof. Use a fine drill or light duck, waterproofed and fireproofed. The additional weight is only three or four pounds, and then you have a real home.

I have already spoken of the necessity in the wilderness for wholesome, abundant, well-prepared food. The cooking in this Selkirk expedition was of the volunteer and amateur variety—hopelessly bad. We fell back upon prunes. Severe and constant exercise at high altitudes seems to carry off all the stored sugar of the system. Sweets are craved. Prunes and ourselves had been strangers for many moons: they seem so boarding-housey. Here we ate them with real relish, as well as to supply deficiencies. What one misses most in wilderness life is bread. Bannock is a poor, but universal substitute. And what is bannock? Bannock, let me reply, is bannock. It resembles nothing in heaven, earth or the depths. It is flour, water, salt, baking powder, proportioned “by guess and by gosh” and baked in flat pans in a reflector before the open fire. If it falls into the fire two or three times, well and good. Charcoal aids digestion, and you can detect a chip if you bite on it. It is only slightly harmed by turning the reflector full into a sleet storm. And finally, if eaten hot, bannock kills at long range. For fresh meat we relied on the country. Nip’s .22 rifle gave us an occasional grouse or ptarmigan; ground squirrels were fairly abundant. Once, when worst had come to worst, we tried porcupine. My position with reference to porcupine is that of the old farmer who engaged to eat a crow

on a wager: "Waal, I *kin* eat crow; but I'll be d—d if I hanker arter it."

But these "small deer" were not the only game. An occasional caribou would cross our glorious park at a long swinging trot, and mountain goats were numerous on the peaks. I have a great respect for the Rocky Mountain goat. He spends his days attracting attention under false pretenses. He attracts attention by being able to go up, down and over places where nothing else can go that hasn't either wings like a bird or suckers on its feet like a bluebottle fly; and he does it under false pretenses because he isn't a goat at all, but an antelope. No nomenclature, however, could withstand the solemn countenance and patriarchal beard. "Goats" they will be called to the end of time. We are told that, facing the original zoological lineup, Adam gave names to all living creatures. I am, therefore, certain that that primeval Hagenbeck, on looking into the serio-comic countenance of *Oreamnus Montanus* and stroking the long white beard of his new pet, not only cleped him "Goat" immediately, but turned over to him all the prehistoric tomato cans of Eden. It may be imagined that, as these snow-white counterfeits possess such remarkable powers of getting where they want to get and of getting away again, they are elusive creatures and haunt the impossibilities of nature and regions where the trend of the landscape is mostly vertical. They can climb sheer cliffs like flies on a window pane, and among the Selkirk crags their trails zigzag up the dizziest ascents. They could be seen trotting fearlessly along their three-inch wide highways, even the tiniest kids, with never a thought of the misstep that would hurl them through

a half-mile of empty space to be crushed to pulp. As being difficult of pursuit, the goat inspires in men the very natural desire to pursue him. Difficulty of acquisition always lends a fictitious value to an object and breeds an ardent passion to acquire it—as witness gold, coquettes and goats. The first of these commodities is mentioned, not merely as a matter of course, but because it is absolutely indispensable in obtaining possession of the second and of much use in the pursuit of the third. This is merely a long way of saying that goats are an expensive luxury.

We were camped in the very center of Goatdom. The aneroid in the main tent said 8,200 feet. Robinson said the aneroid was stuck up and exaggerated things a bit; and in a question of veracity as between Robinson Crusoe and an aneroid, I side with Robinson. Goat sign was all around us and each morning showed fresh caribou tracks in the big snowdrifts. In plain language, we were hungry. When, therefore, Robinson mysteriously whispered to me, "Goats on the Curspitze," it did not take long to scurry into hunting regalia, seize rifles and start on the five-mile hike. Robinson was clad in white from head to foot, a very great advantage in the pursuit either of the goat or of the mountain caribou. On the snow it aids greatly in concealing the movements of the hunter, while on rock or in bush it gives a wonderfully goat-like appearance to the man engaged in a stealthy stalk—so goat-like, indeed, that it is best discarded if more than one hunting party is known to be afield. But here we were perfectly safe. These huge glacier-streaked peaks and blooming parks held the fascination of a new land. All this lovely country was un-

surveyed, unmapped, and the peaks unnamed so far away from rail. The names here quoted were bestowed by ourselves, and we revelled in the privilege. The majority of them have been changed by the later official surveys.

Our route lay over a high ridge with considerable snow, sloping on the far side to a deep valley at the base of the formidable Mount Morris, of which the spur we had named the Curspitze is a subsidiary pinnacle. On the flower-strewn slope facing the great mountain stood an abandoned cabin erected by the promoters of the "Standard Mine" (whence the name of the trail) who once upon a time had cherished hopes either of wresting wealth from these forbidding heights or of disposing of a somewhat generous issue of stock. The cabin was a fairly comfortable lodge in the wilderness, and as it had been abandoned with all its equipment and stores, it was a godsend to the rare and occasional wanderer in this lonely land. Its unique and most interesting feature was a covered way built of young balsams arched overhead and thatched, leading to a dashing stream of never frozen water, tumbling down the mountain some twenty yards from the cabin, thus affording access to water supply through the deep snows of the winter season when the cabin itself is buried to the chimney-pipe. The view from the crest of the ridge was superb. Everywhere snow, ice, crag—a color scheme of white snow, blue ice, gray rock and the dark green of the distant timber. The loneliness, the lifelessness of it all at once oppresses and entrances. It is primordial. We are at the Beginning of Things. The death-like silence is broken only by the roar of avalanches crashing down from some

glacier whose viscous icy stream sweeps on, irresistible as fate.

The sun was low in the west when we tore ourselves away from that marvelous vision and took the easy descent to the cabin. We reached it near sunset. Supper over—to the enjoyment of which the canned fruit and vegetables of the abandoned stores contributed in no small degree—we went outside and from the steep slope viewed the work cut out for us on the morrow. Robinson studied the mountain long and earnestly, while he puffed silently at his pipe. Then, with the air of a man who has made up his mind, he traced for me the route we should take. The sun slipped behind the crest of the ridge—or should I be scientifically accurate and say, “The crest of the ridge slipped in front of the sun?”—and the chill of ice settled on the world; for in these altitudes actual sunlight is the source of all heat. There seems to be no radiation, and even the temporary obscuration of the sun by a drifting cloud affects the temperature. We soon turned in, therefore, and under a caribou skin we slept the sleep of the just and the weary. Bright and early we were astir and off for our hard day’s climb. A bar of chocolate and a few prunes were reserved for eating later in the day, for one should never start a severe climb on a full stomach—except, possibly, a flea! We descended about a thousand feet through park land and timber to a branch of the Downie that foamed along the valley parting us from the *massif* of Morris. Even at that early hour the volume of the current was too great to risk a crossing. We forbore to think what it would be on our return; for in the snow-and-ice country a rivulet

in the morning may be a torrent by nightfall. Finally a fallen log was found reaching nearly across, and a leap from that, with a slippery take-off and a worse landing, put us in icy water only a trifle above the ankle, a mere step remaining to the bank. The mountain rose sharply before us, and the fight was on.

Our first climb was a smooth, grassy slope, not a tree nor a shrub growing upon it owing to its great steepness. Curiously enough, the beautiful even turf was not even washed and furrowed by the torrential rains, a fine illustration of the holding power of matted roots. It reached up at an angle of about 60 degrees for nearly a thousand feet, soft, smooth, slippery as a trimmed lawn. It was difficult, even dangerous, going, despite the easy sound of it. There was not an irregularity to afford foothold, no shrub nor root to cling to, no way to assist the weary leg muscles; and with it all, the chance of a slip and the absolute certainty that there could be no stopping that fearful coasting if one started. We welcomed the rocks above, where the going was comparatively easy.

It was a pleasant clamber, with good footing, over the great weathered rocks where the hoary marmots basked in the sunshine and whistled continually their shrill calls, for all the world like a skilful schoolboy whistling through his fingers: hence their old French voyageur name, *siffleur*, the whistler. Just at the edge of the snow field, at about 9,000 feet elevation, we spied on a great rock a big fellow crouching motionless and apparently enjoying the stupendous scenery. Far, far below was the thin silver wire of the stream. On the green slope opposite lay the cabin, like a brown dot. In the background, vast ranges of rock, snow and

ice billowed away beyond the Columbia to the boundary rim of the Fraser basin. The view was enough to fascinate any marmot. He eyed the intruders and twitched nervously. I stalked him to within ten feet. He could stand it no longer, and somersaulted into his cleft in a panic of fear. Closer still I crept and waited. The urge of his ungovernable curiosity drove him forth again. He simply must know what his visitor was doing. A nose and a pair of bright eyes appeared above the rock. Up then came a gray body, and the marmot, seeing nothing moving, basked again in the sunshine and resumed his steady gaze at the distant majesty of the mountains. At the click of the camera—presto! no marmot. But light can flash through a lens just a little faster—only a little—than a scared marmot can flash off a rock.

We sat and rested, feasting our souls on the glory of the vision outspread before us and laying a further plan of campaign. To the left was the perpetual snow of Instrument Peak, named from the hygrometers, hypsometers, anemometers and other queer things ending in "meter," whose daily reading vexed the souls and tested the limbs and wind of the rookies detailed to visit our scientific playthings. There also was Two-Cornice Peak, with its fine curving glacier whose line of flow is a perfect parabola. To the right were some appalling cliffs, and beyond them, a little above the level of our own position, were more of those extensive grassy slopes where we looked earnestly for goats; but every white spot resolved itself through the glasses into a snow patch. Above us towered a long snow slope, steep but practicable, leading to an *arête* joining the shoulder of Morris to the Two-Cornice

glacier. Up from the *arête* a rocky shoulder rose, sloping to the riskful *aiguille* we had dubbed the Curspitze. Beyond that and far above it leaped into space the grandly imposing pointed pyramid of Morris, dwarfing Cheops and Chephren to nothingness and reared by a mightier Pharaoh. At the foot of this peak more grass fields showed. To reach them we must climb to the *arête*, traverse its entire length, mount the shoulder slope and then skirt the base of the Curspitze along a nasty bit of ice with a bad *bergschrand*, and thus pass from the southern face of the mountain, up which we had been climbing, to the northern face.

A toilsome hour in soft, safe snow brought us to the *arête*. As we gained it, I confess I shrank back, for really serious mountain work was new to me. The most attractive place on earth seemed just then to be the exact center of some limitless prairie. There one couldn't fall off. The *arête* was startlingly narrow, and as we walked along it Robinson Crusoe's oft-repeated advice was heeded to the letter: "Don't look down; don't look down." I didn't. My toes engrossed my whole attention. It is strange how one can restrict his field of vision and concentrate his gaze on the one small place where he is to plant his next step. I saw nothing to the right or to the left of the line we traveled. And it was well; for nothing was there but void and immensity.

After some sixty yards of walking along the *arête*, a perfectly level narrow pathway, it contracted to a veritable knife edge. We could sit on it with a leg dangling airily on either side. From one brink of it the mountain fell away into a terrifying abyss, full

three thousand feet in one unbroken sweep nearly vertical. This awe-inspiring amphitheater was walled in on one side by the perpendicular cliff of Two-Cornice Peak, its forbidding and apparently impossible face marked by well-defined goat trails tracing switch-backs that would have done credit to any engineer. On the other side the bulk of Morris seemed to leap forward and upward like a gigantic flying buttress supporting the walls of the world. Facing us across this great gulf was the mighty Graystone, all crag and ice, hanging there like the drop curtain of some vast theater of the gods. From the other edge of the *arête* walls of jagged rock descended precipitously about a thousand feet to a great shelf on which glistened in the bright sunshine the most extraordinary little lake imaginable. Though the date was well on in August the lake was still ice-bound; the great cold of winter must have frozen it to the bottom. It was in shape a circle as accurately formed as though traced with the dividers, and the sheet of heavy ice upon it was cracked and seamed with perfect symmetry. One huge crack ran as a concentric circle at about two-thirds the radial distance from the center; two other cracks were diameters at right angles. Through these cracks showed the water, a deep purplish blue. The lake looked for all the world like some monstrous meringue pie prepared for the dread invisible audience gathered in the amphitheater to watch out the Tragedy of Time. We named it the Blueberry Pie.

And then the distance claimed our fascinated attention. Pale purple and lavender in ghostly remoteness, the delicate shading broken only by the glitter of sun-

light on snow, the Gold Range traced a jagged skyline. Far to the southeast reared the clean-cut quadrangular pyramid of Sir Donald. And northward, gleaming against the blue, a vast snow peak lifted its hoary head and shoulders far above its fellows, the mysterious, unscaled White Elephant. And there too was its neighbor, the Black Giant, with its strange cross of snow and its formidable black cliffs dropping sheer to the creamy cauldron of the Downie. All the toil and heart-beat and breathlessness of the ascent were forgotten; the smooth, treacherous grass slopes, the sliding shales, the soft snow and naked rock. We sat and drank in the glory of it.

Even at this great height nothing could daunt the courage of the flowers. Wherever a handful of soil could gather in a cleft of the rocks the beautiful pale green pincushions of the silene were growing, starred with their diminutive pink blossoms, and dark blue closed gentians bloomed scarce two inches in height from root to the flower's crown. We gathered our breath for the final dash. Goat trails were everywhere. Fresh hoof marks were in the scant dust at our feet. I turned and looked up at the Curspitze. Over the very topmost point of it peeped a white head.

"A goat, Robinson, by the Piper that played before Moses!"

Then another one peeped around a corner and gravely eyed us. Robinson fondled his "mosquito gun," as he had named his powerful rifle, and looked eager, but said never a word. We climbed toward the goats along the shoulder strewn with enormous boulders. The goats now came into view, actually

approaching us on a diagonal and marching in single file. A huge male was in the lead, a patriarch among goats and with the beard of Abraham; then followed Nanny and her wee kiddie who seemed to have picked up in his short life about all there was to know of mountain craftsmanship; last of all came some young bucks. These were the desirable ones, for we were not American head-hunting Dyaks. No one but a barbarian would kill a nursing female, and Billy's flesh is "rank and smells to Heaven." At about three hundred yards they swerved, and it was evident that they would come no nearer. A careful sight at the guessed distance—. Did you ever hear a rifle shot in the high mountains? The sharp report was taken by the rocks and tossed about like a shuttle-cock of sound; it was echoed from cliff to cliff and magnified and multiplied till it roared in our ears like the din of an artillery duel. The goats merely hit up the pace. Fire again! again! Send them a fusillade of lead. One of the young bucks fell kicking spasmodically. Give him another! One more jerk of the headless-chicken order will send him down thousands of feet. Poor little chap! that quieted him. There he lay by a patch of snow ebbing away the rich red blood that had fed the most vivid active life led by any four-footed beast.

And now to retrieve. The place looked forbidding. The longer we looked, the more forbidding it looked.

"Robinson," said I earnestly, "I'm half starved; but I'd rather try to keep soul and body together another month on that red-whiskered Biologist's soggy bannock and rain-diluted porridge than kill myself going after that goat."

"It is pretty bad," admitted Robinson after careful examination. Then, with his mind fixed on the ninety-seventh delight of mountain climbing, he added, "I'm going to have a try for him anyway. The route is blocked from here though. I must circle the Curspitze and come over the comb of Morris."

With that he left me, for it was no job for a novice. I watched him pass the *bergschrand*, cross the bad ice and disappear around the mountain. At length he reappeared on the sky line. Slowly and with infinite skill he worked toward the dead goat, coming finally quite near the animal which lay in a snow patch, apparently under a projecting ledge. Then came a bit of mountaineering of which none but the born genius is capable, and which sent my heart into my mouth as I thought of possibilities—a thing, by the way, of which the mountaineer must never think. The goat was evidently inaccessible from above the ledge. Robinson Crusoe dropped his body off into space and worked along the ledge, hanging by his fingers over that awful gulf. At last he gained footing beside the goat, gralloched it, hung it upon his back, the desirable portions and the head, and, with the added burden, came back along the ledge in the same terrifying fashion. When he rejoined me he showed me his finger tips: they were bleeding.

"Robinson," I cried, "it isn't usually esteemed a compliment to call a man a goat, but a goat you surely are. Nothing else could have done it."

And Robinson smiled in the satisfied way of a man who knows he is appreciated.

Now for the descent and the long hike to camp.

Robinson began by giving me sage and slightly unnerving counsel.

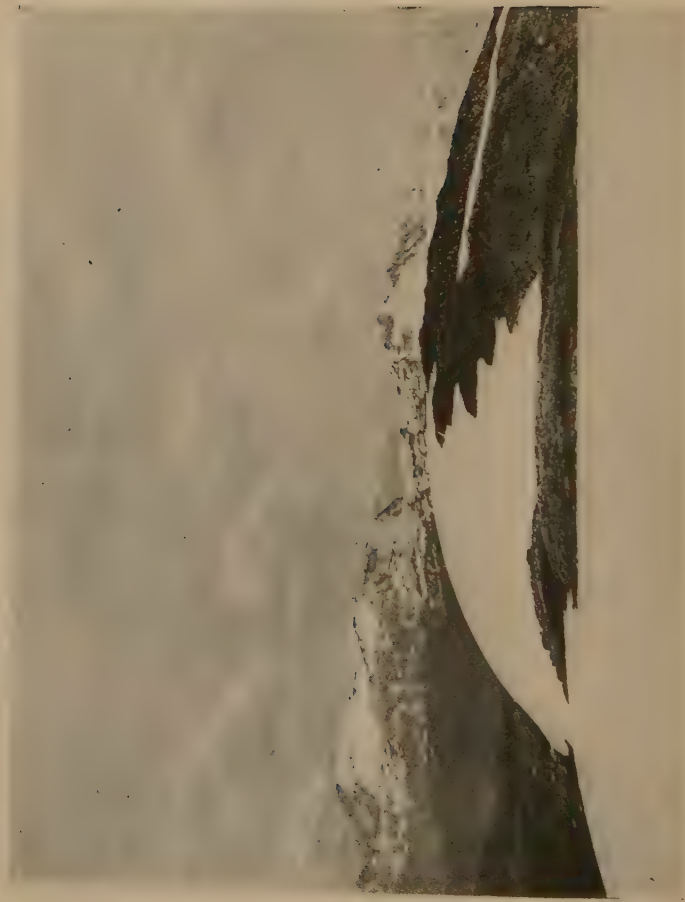
"Never forget," said he, "that nine-tenths of the accidents in mountain climbing occur on the descent."

I couldn't forget it—and so felt greatly comforted.

With almost painful caution we retraced our steps along that dizzying *arête* that seemed to my concentrated attention and warped faculties to be the ridge-pole of all the Selkirk geology. We tested each stone carefully, kicking the loose ones out of the way and listening interestedly to their crashing bounds as they disappeared into the depths on one side or other of the *arête*. At length we came to the upper edge of the field of soft snow up which we had toiled during an exhausting hour. Now for the real fun of mountain climbing, a glissade. It was a bit too steep to try a standing glissade, so we sat on our duxbak hats as a measure of precaution in behalf of a critically important section of our trousers' area. "You're off!" called Robinson. Z-z-z-zip! In a couple of ecstatic seconds we were applying the brakes, heels and rifle stocks, at the foot of those three hundred feet of steep snow. That thrill alone was worth the climb. As we looked back at our furrowed pathway, it showed crimson. No, there had been no casualties; it was only the red snow, a frequent phenomenon in the region, caused by the presence of minute crimson algæ growing beneath the surface of the snow and showing as alarming blood stains in the tracks of the climber. The rock climb below was easy, and Robinson avoided that villainous grass slide by a detour that took us into alder brush, and our climbing troubles were over. We hit a swift pace in the hike to the base camp, where



Coasting on Cornice Peak: "Dee-lighted." (See p. 72.)



Map of the World, as shown in the Book of Nature. (See p. 72.)

the hungry ones greeted us—or was it the goat meat—with wild enthusiasm. Cached in a burrow in a steeply sloping snowdrift, so that the snow should not actually touch the meat, that goat furnished a welcome change of menu for several days.

There was no lack of charm and occupation in the base camp, even for those not immediately concerned in the scientific work. There were hikes to countless points of vantage for the artist or the photographer, and beauty surrounded even the idle. The only thing one had to do in the search for beauty was to look, and beauty was there wherever the glance was cast. And there were flowers, flowers, flowers. Our Alpine park was becoming more gorgeous daily with the advance of the season, while the gradual shrinkage of the snowdrifts brought us a continual succession of early spring blooms at their edges. The golden snow lilies and the purple calyxed white trolius literally pushed up through the snow in their eagerness to burst into bloom. There, too, were the orchids, white cypripediums and gorgeous yellow ones. There were the snowy stars of the clintonia lilies and the lovely cornus, the mountain relative of our own dogwood. Scarlet, orange and yellow tiger lilies nodded their freckled faces at the humming birds; and everywhere the heavenly blue lupines and those botanical hoaxes, the painted cups, whose apparent blossoms, ablaze with every shade of red and yellow, are merely gaudy leaves concealing and protecting the modest, inconspicuous bloom. Then there were acres of exquisite heather in three types, white, cream and pink, like a velvet carpet to the foot and a couch beyond compare. And at the base of every rounded boulder grew a deep fringe of

the precious twin flower, *linnea borealis*, each stem supporting two dainty pink bells, lusciously, delicately, fragrant with a perfume like nothing else in the wide world of odors. To it not even the trailing arbutus is rival. Through all this flowery splendor we prowled, the length and breadth of our plateau. Many a merry glissading party we enjoyed on the very top of Cornice Peak, an extraordinary mountain with perfectly hemispherical summit where the rock ribs cut into the smooth snow in curious fashion, so that the entire mountain crest looked like a great tellurian globe, the lands mapped out in rock, the oceans in purest snow. Marmots whistled as we passed them, gophers sat on their haunches and chattered at us; past us trotted cow caribou, and their awkward calves; and everywhere the ubiquitous pesky porcupines seeking what of human possessions they might destroy. The only vulnerable part of these nuisances is their nose, and a sharp tap on it is instantly fatal. But their tenacity of life under the most frightful bodily wounds is amazing. On one occasion near camp I shot an enormous porky with a high-power rifle. The bullet tore away one hind leg and hip and disemboweled the poor creature, who started coolly away on his three remaining legs, dragging his entrails after him.

But finally the weather demon of the Selkirks grew jealous of our stay. A blizzard of cyclonic intensity swept down upon us one night, nearly wrecking the camp. Rain, hail, sleet and snow hammered on the tents, driven by wild blasts from every quarter of the heavens. In the morning we counted one hundred and twenty-eight trees uprooted in the immediate vicinity of the camp, one of them fallen across the corner of

a tent—a close call for the sleeping occupants. The weather seemed never to recover from the shock of this great storm. Rain storms, hail storms, snow storms succeeded each other in swift succession. We could photograph them as they swept, sharply defined, along the mountain sides. On the peaks the fresh snow was lying where it fell—and this in mid-August. For three soggy weeks the nearest we ever came to seeing the sun was a pale grease spot in the sky now and then. There was nothing to do but lie in the tent and read Shakespeare. In that wretched downpour I increased notably my acquaintance with the Bard of Avon. The *soi-disant* cook grew weary of cooking in the rain, and the diluted apologies for meals became impossible. Three weeks of these weather conditions grew unbearable, and the pack train was not expected for two more. Three of us resolved to hike for the Columbia and risk catching the weekly boat on its down trip. Now my affection for back-packing is as that of Satan for holy water, and I devised a scheme for lessening the labor.

The Plains Indians' device of the pony *travois* was familiar to me, and I foresaw great relief in a man-power *travois*. Unfortunately I had my labor-saving vision a little too late, for there was no time for the peeled resinous poles to dry. The pull of the wet, resin-exuding wood on the bare arms was fiendish; arm and hand slipped from every hold. But nevertheless in a whirling storm of sleet and rain we packed our worldly goods, Nip and Kinky Belle and I, and started on the weary miles to the Columbia—seventeen of them were there, with seven thousand feet of drop en route. We planned to spend the night at the

worse than primitive Grindstone Cabin and thus divide the journey. I started boldly off with my packing device which I had presumptuously named the Skid Wagon. Ere we reached the Grindstone it was rechristened the Hell Wagon. There was a stove and dry wood in the wretched shack, so we fried caribou steak sliced from a splendid stag just killed, drank copious draughts of tea and were happy. When time came to turn in, Nip and Kinky Belle had the bunk, built in one corner and comfortably corduroyed with cedar poles. It was one luxurious couch! I took the woodpile, the most comfortable woodpile I had ever slept on. When the stove was red hot, I was quite cozy. When the fire burned low and I began to freeze, I would rouse myself and replenish it from my woodpile. By morning my bed was gone. The atmosphere in these safety cabins, closed as they are often for years at a time, is indescribably musty and foul, so of course we slept with the door wide open. Across the sill I set a Stonebridge lantern, indispensable companion in the wilds, to deter intruders. Only one appeared. A sociable bear poked his head in and said, "*Whoof!*" and the resulting duet of feminine screams scared the poor timid thing miles away. Nip passed the night, between cat-naps, pulling forth by the tail chilled little wood mice which had burrowed in among her hair for warmth. Even the brief northern night of summer dragged under these conditions; but after two or three eternities morning dawned. Bright and early we were up and away, for we dared not miss that boat.

This time I shouldered a seventy-five-pound pack and Nip one of thirty-five, for our rather frail pal

could not back-pack, and the Hell Wagon had been consigned to the flames it merited. The Standard Trail is, I think, in its lower reaches the most beautiful trail, as a trail and without regard to the scenic beauty of the region which it traverses, that I have ever traveled, shaded with the feathery cedar and graced by every lovely shrub that grows in fairy land. We had, however, scant time for admiration as we dashed down the steep slope with the speed of the overburdened, for it is harder to march slowly than rapidly down a heavy grade. We welcomed the devil's clubs as a friendly sign of our journey's end. It was a blessed relief to get rid of those packs; but when I threw mine to the ground I promptly followed it. A heavy pack had so disturbed my equilibrium by establishing a false center of gravity during the continuous hours of severe labor, that I fell forward when relieved of the weight. A few seconds sufficed to restore the normal.

We reached the river with a brief hour to spare before the boat steamed past the Frenchman's Hat and answered our signal. We boarded the still moving boat by a shaky gang-plank and were off on the hair-raising experience of a ride down the wild Columbia. For the first time that year Forslund resolved to run the Revelstoke Canyon instead of tying up at Mosquito Landing. It was a wonderful piece of work. Straight at a projecting bend of the rock wall of the canyon the captain steered again and again, only to be caught by the reflected boiling waves and tossed to safety. Had he tried to steer a mid-stream course, the cockle shell boat would have been crushed to splinters against the opposite wall.

"What a perfect knowledge of the channel this must require," I ventured to the Captain after a particularly brilliant piece of this scientific guesswork of steering.

"Channel?" replied Forslund, his eyes glued to the leaping billows, "There is no channel, I know only how to read what I see, and that's the waves that indicate the currents! and they change constantly in direction and velocity."

The swirl and turmoil of the waters in that walled-in canyon is matched by the play of the winds. As we sat in the bow a gust carried Nip's pet duxbak hat off into space.

"Well, I was through with it," was her philosophical comment.

Five minutes later the Chinese cook brought back the prodigal. The gust which had blown the hat off the bow had blown it back on the boat again astern.

As we shot out of the mouth of the canyon, Revelstoke appeared before us, dominated by the superb *massif* of Mount Begbie, whose snowy crown is beaten of continual storms, while summer-clad mothers wheel their babies nonchalantly along the city's streets. Well they know that those storms just can't break away from Begbie and cross the river. A stranger would be apprehensively dolled up in raincoat and goloshes.

We landed. Baths: shaves: civilization. Behind us in all their grandeur towered eternally the Selkirks of the Big Bend.

CHAPTER V

INTO THE SASKATCHEWAN WILDERNESS

Sidney Unwin—a tribute. The cayuse. The start, and Muggins. Making camp. Amiskiwi trout. Learning to jump. Birth of the Amiskiwi. Angel feathers at Baker Pass. Mummery. The lost trail. The stampede. Cabin Creek Hill. Ball Bearing Sidewalk. *Cul-de-sac* on the Blaeberry. Howse Pass at last! The Saskatchewan. Fording. Camp Ojinjah. The wolverene. Waterfowl Lakes. View from Bow Pass. Sid's close call. Muskeg. Mosquito Camp.

DELIGHTFUL as are the beaten paths of travel in this big ball of beauty that we call the Earth, there is charm unspeakable in combining beauty and rarity. To see what few or none have ever seen before, is to the traveler as an unique gown to a society belle, or a scoop to a cub reporter. Consequently when Sid outlined to us the route of our proposed expedition into the wilds, as we idled around the camp fire at our base on Emerald Lake, and added seductively, "It will be only the second time that a white woman has ever been in that region," a shriek of joy went up from the only members of the expedition who really counted, and we set seriously to work upon the plans in detail. Our objective point was the vast group of mountains of the Rocky Range from fifty to one hundred miles north of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which lift their icy crowns eleven to twelve thousand

feet and give birth to the Saskatchewan and Athabaska Rivers. This region, though traversed by trapper and prospector during two centuries, and—parts of it—by the Government survey, is to the ordinary traveler a land unknown, and therefore a land of allurements.

Here I desire to pay deserved and grateful tribute to that prince of guides, Sidney Unwin. Unsurpassed in woodcraft and resourcefulness, unequaled in thoughtful kindness to his party, and with the charm of courteous manner that adds the final touch of perfection to the little self-centered microcosm that a party in the wilderness constitutes, to him is owing through several seasons the personal safety, the perfect comfort, the entire pleasure of the expeditions. He had learned to love the life of the open as he slept on the African veldt under the Southern Cross during the Boer War. College-bred gentleman that he was, he engaged, after the war, in the outfitting and guiding business in Banff and became speedily one of the famous guides of the region. He was a favorite among the Indians of the Northland and beat them at their own games, earning from them the name of Mustiyeh Nohounga, the Rabbit Running, in recognition of his defeat of their swiftest runner in a set race. Modest and retiring, he showed his supreme skill by deeds not words; and it was only by accidentally seeing in his home the diploma conveying to him the personal thanks of his King and of Parliament for valued and devoted service, that we learned that he was a hero. I was with him on the Athabaska when the news of the outbreak of the World War reached him on his arrival at the railway after a long expe-

dition. He at once disposed of his string of horses and offered himself for service. A sentence from the last letter he ever wrote, in painful left-handed scrawl, reveals the spirit of the man: "Aside from having my right arm blown off at the shoulder, being totally deafened by shell-fire, and having my head full of shrapnel fragments, I'm fine and dandy." This was no affectation of courage; he meant it. When he was thus horribly wounded, he had just ordered his gun crew to leave the battery and go back to their dug-out because, "it's too dangerous; the Boche has the range," and he was serving his gun alone. They got him back to Blighty; and he was listed as convalescent, when a hearty laugh jarred one of the shell fragments into a vital corner of his brain and all was over. God rest a noble spirit.

Preliminaries were soon arranged; that is, food and baggage *per capita*: for in a wilderness trip food and baggage are not merely the only preliminaries to be thought of—they are the beginning, middle and end of your thinking. There is nothing else to think of except the glories of the land and the supreme happiness of just being alive and banishing hunger as it recurs. Further, it was resolved that some of the members of the party should make the march afoot, changing off occasionally with the riders. Happily, there was no back-packing. After coming alive out of the Selkirks, I had taken a solemn vow never again to insult my vertebræ and shoulders with a heavy pack.

The start was made the next day but one. In the interim those that counted were variously affected by the imminence of the unknown. Nip, I think, made

her will and pinned her hopes of physical salvation to her pneumatic mattress. Corkie, practical soul, reviewed her belongings in order to reduce her kit to smallest weight and compass. Cupid went about in a dream, overwhelmed by the mystery of the wilderness she saw all around her and of which she was soon to be a part.

"I feel," she said, "as if I were about to undergo an operation and wasn't quite sure whether I should come out of the ether."

Then she sat down and wrote a long farewell letter to her mother.

The eventful morning dawned, for a wonder, clear and bright; and we saw the dawning of it. Sid was soon initiating us into the mysteries of packing and of the diamond hitch. For it is a mystery, this packing; and the diamond hitch is the perfection of secure tying. All your worldly goods, from a tent to a teakettle, must be made an integral part and undetachable member of your pack-horse; and a pack-horse is about the slickest creature on earth when it comes to dodging work. The doctrine of original sin is exemplified in him. He knows to a nicety how close to each other two trees must grow to give gangway to his body and yet scrape the pack from his rebellious spine. He is cunning to swallow whole atmospheres to distend his sides withal, like the frog in the fable, when the hitch is thrown. And if you in tenderness of heart or foot sympathize with his painful grunts under the process of tight lacing, and fail to throw the ultimate ounce of your weight on the pack rope, your foot braced against his flank and every muscle straining, you will sometime find him somewhere on

the steep-pitched roof of the landscape nonchalantly munching undergrowth in an evil glee and joyously regarding his pack—if it be in sight.

He has thrown it over his head from his unhallowed back with a shivery movement akin to the shimie. And while you repack and risk your immortal soul in coruscating comments upon the doing of it, and upon himself, and upon his forebears even unto his three-toed fossil ancestor of the Uintah, he positively smiles in sardonic glee. When there is a forest and down timber, he is in the thick of it. When there is plain and open trail, he will have none of it. All this must be reckoned with by the packer, who must also put the heterogeneous mass of equipment in a symmetrical pack in which not a cubic inch of space shall be lost and which shall be smooth and of even balance, so as not to chafe that precious back. For, with all his cussedness, your pack-horse must be mollycoddled. He is your life until you get out of the woods; and it is horses first, men second, in consideration all the time. Even your camp ground must be selected, not with regard to convenience to you, but with reference to pasturage and water for him. Verily the packer's task is monstrously difficult. He must be diplomat, prestidigitator, veterinarian and a specialist in equine psychology; and when he is all these, his train will perform prodigies.

The last hitch was thrown; the last knot tied. Cupid bestrode a cayuse for the first time in her young life, and sat in agonized insecurity, beseeching everybody not to lay a rude hand upon her steed, lest he bolt. Sid vaulted into the saddle, and we were off down the splendid driveway from Emerald Lake to

Field. Suddenly Sid turned sharp into the forest, and in a twinkling the curtain of the wilderness was draped about us and the silent places swallowed us up. A faint trail was barely traceable, a mere depression in the green forest floor. It was the old Amiskiwí trail, old two centuries ago, one of the great Indian highways to the Saskatchewan, the torrential Athabaska and the frozen north. The waving pines sighed above us. Flowers starred the soft moss beneath, as they do in no other land. Flaming tiger lilies flaunted their gaudy faces, trying to conceal their freckles with pollen-rouge, and the white stars of another lily, the delicate clintonia, nodded greetings, while the snowy cornus carpeted the ground with conspicuous blossoms. The trail led quickly to the Emerald River, and as the train splashed into its cold, swift flood the track of a moose on the bank told us how lightly civilization has impinged on the region. May its curse be long delayed. Rugged and steep grew the trail. Down timber made the Maze of Woodstock seem a straight and plain way, and a first small patch of muskeg, tracked over by moose, gave foretaste of wrath to come. High, and higher still, we crept. Splendid snow-clad mountains, their sides scarred with avalanche paths, raised their crests ahead beyond the valley of the Keewatinok. Our infantry contingent with beating hearts and bursting lungs fixed their eyes upon the ground and plodded. We were still soft and green after a city winter, and one weary foot before the other covered so little space. Three days later it was play to us: so quickly does the wilderness put a man in perfect repair. One there was of the party who did his potent best to cheer us. Dear little

Muggins! Racing from one to another, looking up into the tired faces with a merry twinkle in his soft brown eyes and a still merrier twinkle in his restless tail, he said as plainly as could be, "Keep up, fellows! I'm not tired yet, and I'm smaller than you." And then he was off up the mountain-side barking a frantic summons to come and kill a fool hen. What a grouse dog Muggins is! Gordon setter and water spaniel, the ideal wilderness dog, always sweet and clean, a hunter unexcelled, a friend beyond desire; the most lovable dog I know.

Rhododendrons now grew about us, with clusters of handsome but nauseating bloom, pale creamy yellow in hue. Pink heather a foot tall showed the altitude we were attaining. An almost perpendicular gorge opened before us, at the bottom of which roared the Keewatinok and down which the trail led in precarious zigzags. Here the mountaineering experiences of the trained cayuses showed to perfection. Both pack and saddle animals made the dizzy descent without a false step. One more divide was still before us, and we assailed it in grim silence. At last we descended wearily to the Amiskiwí River, and a shout of joyous relief arose as Sid leaped to the ground and loosened the cinch of his saddle. It meant camp; camp and hot tea. Bless Camp Amiskiwí! our first and best loved of the trip; for on no subsequent march were we so utterly weary.

Outspanning at camp is a marvel of quickness. Every man leaps to his assigned task, and in a trice saddles are off and neatly piled. There are tricks, too, in this trade as in all others, for you must be sure to loose the back cinch first, lest you get within range

of an enthusiastic kick. The diamond hitch comes apart as by magic; the cayuses are hobbled, and every last one of them is on his back, heels in air, indulging in a hot roll. Just then your fire blazes and a pot of tea bubbles cheerily. The two things that a thoroughly fatigued man craves above all others in the North Woods are tea and sleep in the order named. Ready to drop, you light a bit of fire, draw a pot of rich amber tea; straightway rest steals upon you and pervades your being; you can feel the weariness in you dissolving. Soon the miracle of revitalization is accomplished, and with zest and delight, you set about the task of creating a home for a one night stand. And then, if your camp chances to be in some charmed spot like this little nook beside the clear Amiskiwí, you tie on the flies and fill your frying pan with delicious trout; or you gaze in wonder at the beauty around you, frail, fairy beauty of a million flowers; awesome, compelling beauty of the snow mountains looking down upon you, ephemeral pigmy that you are.

The little level pocket of our bivouac was a dream of floral loveliness. The painted cups were in full evidence, and it had been a study that first day to note their varied brilliance. On the high trail they blazed in scarlet and crimson; as we dropped to the Amiskiwí they paled through every gradation of redness and pinkness to a blushing yellow. Potentillas overlaid the mountain-side with gold. Exquisitely fragrant pink primroses peeped from the grass, while the sight of a single big dandelion, a rarity here, almost made Cupid homesick. In the damp spots, flat as if nailed to the ground, were the golden-green leaf-rosettes of

the insect-eating pinguiculas, soft sounding Latin for "little fatties," and their blue flowers nodded upon slender stems. Woe to the wee bug or tiny fly that touches these sticky leaves. They close upon him, absorb his juices and leave him a skeletonized shell. Everywhere were the strawberry blossoms, rich promise of luscious profusion to come, with none to enjoy but Bruin. But flowers were not the sole owners of this bower; on a sand spit beside the likeliest trout pool of them all, the footprints of an enormous cougar told their tale of prowls by night. The big tawny pussy-cats are great fishermen.

The play time of the day waned toward the twilight, and we sat by the river and feasted eye and mind upon the majesty that faced us where the giant Sea Lion reared his mighty head and neck from recumbent body in age-long vigil and where the precipices and snows of Mount Deville beetled and glittered in the dying day. The dark stole over all; the balsams by the river were black with it. We crept into the little canoe tent and on a great heap of balsam boughs laid shingle-wise, springiest of mattresses, we forgot the world, the flesh and the devil.

Five of the clock on a clear morning found us rubbing our sleepy eyes as the alarm clock of the wilds—a tin kettle vigorously beaten—raised its diabolical racket. The breakfast-getting and packing were running smoothly along, and Sid had already rounded up and tethered the cayuse band: there was no temptation for them to stray from such pasture as this. By eight o'clock we were off up the Amiskiwí, trout lying tantalizingly in the still pools as we passed. The going became harder and steeper, and many a rocky spur

jutting boldly out into the current had to be climbed since it could not be outflanked owing to deep water. And on these spurs down timber, the bane of a pack train, lay in deep tangles. The sturdy cayuses leaped some of the interlaced trunks and scrambled over others. Nip said she qualified that day for any hunt club in America. Once only did an unlucky horse, fortunately under pack and not ridden, manage to drop himself into a tight place and lie there helpless, his legs sticking up in the air like a cockroach in a boarding house biscuit. This meant unpacking, extricating and repacking, at some expense of time and language. But at last we had left the rough spots behind us and came out on the meadows of the upper Amiskiwí, open going and considerable muskeg of a rather mild order.

The change of flora here was most interesting. The muskeg was dotted with yellow violets and beautiful *spiralís* orchids, white clove-scented spikes of them. Lovely brown marigolds and blue erigerons varied the color scheme, and a total stranger was the perfect likeness of a strawberry plant, whose rich magenta blossom exhaled the delicate fragrance of crushed peach leaves. Clusters of straggling pines grew where the soil was solid enough to support a tree, and porcupines ambled to them for refuge, much to Muggins' disgust. Through all filtered the water, channels of it, pools of it, clear as crystal, creeping, seeping away to join the Amiskiwí. A wall of heavy timber showed ahead and spelled the end of the muskeg. Again we were following the river, now beside it, now in it, scrambling over rocks and log jams and climbing cliffs like the wall of a house. Thickets of

valeriana filled the air with the odor of heliotrope. Higher and higher we rose, the gain in elevation indicated by occasional pincushions of the Alpine pinks.

A sudden turn in the tortuous river bed drew from all a cry of amazement. We had reached the source of the Amiskiwi and the birth of a river was before our eyes. "The mountains labored," runs the fable, "and a mouse was born." But here from the bowels of the laboring mountains gushed a mad torrent, a river of size at its first issuance into the light. From a perpendicular cliff throughout an area in the form of a rude square fifty feet on a side, powerful streams shot forth as from a pressure main. It was a wall of water, the entire river at a leap, unfordable on foot at its very source. Such river births are common from the foot of a great glacier, but I know of no other instance in the world of a river leaping in a hundred jets from a vertical mountain-side. A sharp ascent from this marvel among the fountains of the world led us out upon the beautiful Alpine meadow of Baker Pass, seven thousand two hundred feet above the sea. The higher slopes of the pass among the dwarfed and scraggy timber, where the camp site was chosen, were thickly carpeted with soft resilient heather, luxuriantly abloom in myriads of white and pink bells. It seemed sacrilege to tread upon it; but we compromised the situation by slipping heavy shoes from tired feet and, Orientals for the nonce, stepping shoeless on the gorgeous rug that Nature had spread for us. Everybody was thoroughly broken in to allotted tasks, and the unpacking and camp making went like magic. We were soon idly watching long whiskers of rain and snow sweeping across the glaciers of Habel and

Collie, and boding ill for the night. The hail and sleet began to reach us, and the undaunted mosquitoes dodged the hailstones to attack. Those Baker Pass mosquitoes could stand more cold than any others I have ever seen. We turned in early to enjoy the pelt-ing of the sleet on the taut-stretched tent. And the early bed was welcome, for it had been a stiff pull of a march.

All marches in the wild are made without halt. The labor of packing cannot be faced twice in a day, and it is far better to push steadily on for five or six hours from the start, covering fifteen to eighteen miles, and make camp at two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Then comes a cold lunch; bannock and butter, preserves, cheese and corned beef, sardines and—TEA. Follows then absolute idleness, if you wish; or you can climb and wander and photograph to content of heart. The evening brings its splendid hot dinner and TEA. Should I suddenly be endowed with powers of poesy, my first sonnet would be in glorification of tea, the herb of miracle. Then you are at peace with the world. Moreover, this method is not merely best for you, it is absolutely necessary for your horses. They cannot stand the daily mileage that a man would easily endure, and the location of the camp must be regulated by pasture and water for them. It is often asked by the uninitiated why the hardier mule, invaluable in mountain travel in the southwestern United States, is not the beast of burden here. He is effectually barred by his small feet, becoming instantly and hopelessly mired in the mildest form of muskeg.

The wild promise of the night was wildly fulfilled. The gale moaned through the pines and shrieked aloud

among the high peaks that walled the pass. Brilliant lightning shot in jagged flame across the sky and struck like vicious serpents at the blue ice of the glaciers. In the midst of it all the embers of the camp fire fanned to flame, and showers of sparks blew broadcast. Here was a real danger, for in the solitude fire is the one thing dreadful; so in strictly undress uniform in the icy pelt of the storm I dragged my protesting self out of a down sleeping bag, drenched that pesky fire and crept shivering back to the comforts of home—and water a hundred yards away in the black void.

“Turn out all, and look at the angel feathers!” Sid’s merry voice rang out to tin kettle accompaniment. A sheet of spotless snow covered our world that nineteenth of July, full six inches of it. The dark pines and balsams drooped their branches beneath its weight, and the tall spruces shed feathery masses of it down the back of our necks in true Christmas fashion. The behavior of flowers in snow—or shall I say, of snow upon flowers—is a singular phenomenon. White blossoms were buried out of sight; the blue ones made valiant efforts to shake it off, with partial success; while upon red flowers the snow would not lie at all.

Our storm was over, and to the enthusiastic outcry of Cupid’s artistic soul, “Oh, what do you think of this?” the Pessimist merely cocked one eye aloft and growled:

“The best part of it is that patch of blue sky: it’s the one glimpse of glory in this gob of gloom.”

Perhaps this was pardonable in him, for his tent had leaked.

A wilderness camp, too, is a mighty leveler. There stood the Distinguished Physicist drying out a feminine nightie by the fire—another tent had leaked—and a shell comb was stuck in his hat-band for safe keeping. And he at that time a supposedly confirmed bachelor.

The blue patch of sky grew and grew. The last ragged flecks of cloud drifted away after a lingering embrace of the tall summits, and as the sun shone out in splendor the snow rapidly disappeared. The sudden melting of these summer snows is as singular as their sudden coming.

The pack train moved off through the treeless meadows of the crest of the pass for all the world like an old-fashioned circus parade, the swaying of the cayuses under their cumbrous packs giving them a ludicrously elephantine appearance. The part of the ubiquitous small boy in this parade was taken by hundreds of curious gophers sitting erect on their little tails to watch the monsters go by, and vanishing—Presto!—into their burrows with a squeak and a kick of tiny heels together when we drew too near for even a gopher's curiosity.

From Baker Pass to the Continental Divide at Howse Pass is an ordeal. The route—I avoid the word "trail" as an unwarranted euphemism—is a succession of tremendous ascents and descents that try the mettle of man and beast to the utmost. Add to this a thoroughly wet undergrowth, and you have the acme of hard going. Tangles of timber, the storm-wrecks of decades, had to be cleared away or circumvented in long detours. Sid's axe was in constant demand. It is a cardinal principle of trail travel,

however, never to cut a barrier that a cayuse can jump; and they can jump with ease higher than their own bellies. But they do it so smoothly that not once in all our experience was even the greenest tenderfoot unseated. Note, of course, that in treating of riders and riding, the term '*tenderfoot*' is a figure of speech. But as we came out above timber line on a long bare ridge at close upon 8000 feet, a panorama that amply repaid that hardship was revealed. Mount Mummery rose mightily to our left just across the yawning depths of a great canyon. I cannot conceive a more impressive, a more soul-satisfying vision of grandeur and beauty than this wonderful mountain seen from a great elevation. It is so closed about with a maze of other great peaks that half its wonders are concealed when seen from its base. Only isolated peaks are most impressive when seen from below. The vastness of Mummery grew upon us as we sat silent before it. It dominated our world. There were attributes in it of the divine: inaccessible loneliness, enduring changelessness, awe-inspiring supremacy. The undefiled purity of Mummery's illimitable snow field, the resistless sweep of its giant glaciers, the defiant upheaval of its black granite crown, too steep for snow to cling to, yet beaten and lashed by storm perpetual, stir the inmost soul. Those swirling clouds that give rare glimpses, or rather suggestions, of the black apex seem placed there to ward off the profane gaze of man and to recall the mysterious glory of Sinai. You whisper in the presence of Mummery. The seriousness of its beauty is overwhelming. We turned from it regretfully and dived into the canyon, gradually entering heavy timber.

As we descended the canyon, all around us rose a labyrinth of peaks guarding their monarch. Black rock, blue ice, white snow, heaped from earth to heaven, filled the world. Pelion was piled upon Ossa, and Olympian Zeus was near.

"Halt!" came Sid's call from below.

With his marvelous instinct of the woods, he had divined that something was wrong. But once in his life, and that years before, had he been in this region; and yet he read in the untracked forest the message that we had turned down from the ridge at the wrong point, and would end in inextricable confusion on Ensign Creek instead of Cabin Creek, our objective. Back toiled the pack train. As we reached a depression in the mountain's side, the head of a transverse canyon, Sid announced that we must camp for the day while he reconnoitered. It was a camp forever to be remembered: our little harbor of refuge, just at timber line, faced directly upon Mummery. What a privilege! A half day communing with the glory of that mountain. Tents were pitched, the cayuses hobbled and turned out to none too luxurious pasturage, and Sid plunged into the unknown after drawing for us a map by which we might hope to extricate ourselves in case of an accident to him. Some of us felt pretty serious, and some did not know the danger—and we took good care that they should not, for those were the ones that counted.

Then broke the storm. A wave of wintry cold swept down upon us from Mummery. The air was filled with whirling snow, often blotting out objects twenty yards away. The wind rose to a blast and gusted in wild williwaws from the peaks. In the midst

of it all the bellies of those infernal cayuses yearned for the rich pastures of Baker Pass, and the bunch stampeded. A general restlessness was the first sign. The temptress was a pinto mare—"the female of the species." That villainous witch deliberately went from one to the other of the band and, nose to nose, communicated with them in some occult way. Then, ring-leader in evil that she was, she rose upon her hind legs and thrust her two hobbled fore feet out to a rock in a dashing rivulet that flowed in front of our camp. Then she gathered in her hind hoofs and reached out again with the handcuffed pair for another rock, and then across. In a second every heaven-forsaken reprobate of the band was at her heels, and they hobby-horsed up that mountain at surprising speed. The progress of a band of hobbled horses is ridiculous to look at. It is as if all the rocking horses in toyland were going at once. But this time it wholly failed to amuse. We raced after them, the Physicist and I. If anyone had told me an hour previously that I could run up a mountain at 8000 feet and ever breathe again, I should have branded him as—to say the least, in error. But we did it, and by good luck rounded up the horses. When each one was tethered stoutly to a tree we breathed again. The darkness dropped down upon us after a sunset in winter effects of pale gold and purple which showed marvelously in the cloud strata over Mummery. With the darkness came Sid. He had performed prodigies, covering many miles on foot and blazing the way with his pocket knife until he had picked up the old blazes near the perpendicular walls of Cabin Creek.

A half day had been lost, and we cheerfully agreed to Sid's proposal to make the next day's march a record. Food had been rather nicely calculated, and Howse Pass must be reached on schedule or the much-desired day's rest and fishing at the mouth of the Ojinjah Wapta must be foregone. We were up at three o'clock, therefore, in Arctic cold, pulling the pack ropes with stiffened fingers. Everybody provided himself or herself (confound it! *why* hasn't the English language a common-gender pronoun?) with a couple of sandwiches to eat in the saddle. And these sandwiches! Delicious, you must acknowledge, but gastronomy run wild. We named the various styles. There was the "High Trail Sandwich," a succulent concoction of chopped onions and fried bacon made up between thin slices of bannock liberally anointed with "Alberta butter," which is, being interpreted, bacon grease. Then there was the "Angel's Dream," toasted bannock overlaid with cheese and fried in bacon grease. It received its name on the principle that if you could eat two of them and not dream that night that you were an angel, your digestion was normal. Sneer not, ye gourmets. In the wilderness and the solitary place, under the urge of hardship and the pelt of snow and sleet, you crave precisely these fats, and they "stick to the ribs" nobly. Our pockets filled with these dainties and our minds with pleasurable anticipation of hunger to come, we marched forth.

It was a fierce pull to the summit of the ridge, and then a work of some delicacy to follow blazes made with a knife blade. But Sid's woodcraft was equal to any task, and we zigzagged down that side-of-a-house that fronts on Cabin Creek with no casualties

and only one wreck, when Blackie threw her pack clear over her head. We retrieved it only a couple of hundred feet down the mountain-side and congratulated ourselves on the good luck that had stopped it short of a couple of thousand. Cabin Creek is a roaring glacial stream, giving very bad fording over slippery boulders, in a current almost strong enough to wash a cayuse off his feet. Poor Muggins dashed boldly in and was swept away like a burnt cork. He crawled out a quarter mile farther down, shook off a shower of icy drops and rejoined us, barking gleefully and without losing a single wag of his jolly little tail. The train now toiled down the bed of the creek, over great rocks and bare stones of all sizes. We called this miserable stretch The Ball Bearing Sidewalk, and how the cayuses' hoofs stood it at all was a wonder. This lasted a few miles too far, and then the trail turned into beautiful primeval forest.

The floor of this forest was the vegetable débris of all the ages. Fallen trunks crossed our pathway in every stage of decay. Some were new fallen with recent storms; others again were covered with moss and lichen, but still solid. Some were punky and decayed under a thin shell, crumbling to red-brown flakes under foot, and others still had merged with the forest floor, just a long green mound, a moss grown grave. If the mountains showed us the mightier geologic processes, here was soil-making in perfection of detail.

Debouching at last on the Blaeberry, we struggled up that swift and powerful stream, well named by some braw Scot trapper from the dense thickets of blueberries fringing its banks. A brief halt gave us

lunch and the Blaeberry Corn Cure, for all the infantry sat upon the bank and soaked hot and weary feet in the icy current until they were red as lobsters. Far away at the head of the valley shone the goal of the march, the snows of Howse Peak flashing in the sun. Fighting our way in growing difficulty of country, we forded the riskful stream twenty-two times in the afternoon, and still Howse Pass lay far ahead. The evening shadows fell; the hungry cayuses became restive and uncontrollable in the utter absence of trail and from being caught in one rocky trap after another. The situation became too acute even for precaution, and the infantry, when keeping to the bank meant pulling themselves over the rocks and sheer walls by clinging to roots and branches, simply plunged into the icy water close to shore and took what they got—and what they got was exceeding cool and moist. When a monkey bridge, a fallen tree, was found lying across the torrent, now diminished in width but not in violence, it was welcomed not as a means of keeping dry, but as saving time lost in fording by relays. We hiked stubbornly forward, for we dared not let darkness overtake us in this chasm. But even in our vital haste we could not fail to note the splendid timber; a few balsams, much black spruce, the great Douglas firs and the pines. Occasional hemlocks drooped their green lacey boughs to sweep the earth, and for the first time the *arbor vitæ* (white cedar) appeared which we had met in such giant magnificence in the Big Bend. The men of the party were groping and stumbling along the steep slopes above the view, for the fewer ridden horses in a mess like this the better. Sid, the ladies and the pack splashed along

in the bed of the stream as the least of two evils. We heard rather than saw the Blaeberry becoming less and less in volume and turbulence. Then in the gathering gloom the train became entangled in an inextricable *cul-de-sac*. Great rocks and deep pools forbade further advance. The swiftly descending night forbade retreat and search for a better route. The excited and almost exhausted horses fell into a plunging panic. At this crisis Cupid lost her nerve and, seeing herself already mangled and dead, and possibly cherishing certain apprehensions concerning her post-mundane residence, she injected into the *mêlée* a shrill soprano wailing which is the last straw to the camel's back for a guide in difficulties. All linguistic safety valves for pent-up pressure of feelings were closed to Sid—or so he imagined—and weighted down by the presence of ladies. We men hastened and fell down the bank to aid, and I can see Sid yet grasping his axe, both arms raised above his head in a despairing gesture of temporary surrender. But it was only for a second. Nip was as cool as a cucumber, as is her wont in emergencies, and Sid saw it. Quickly he fought his way to her among the kicking beasts and said: "You can keep your head. Ride up that bank, no matter how steep, and the rest will follow. I must untangle this mess of packs."

There was just one narrow take-out from that pool, between two enormous fallen boulders, and the rocky side-hill above was never made for horses. But by a splendid struggle Nip's cayuse succeeded in making the almost vertical scramble. The other saddle horses followed, and the pack was soon disentangled and extricated from its risky position. At last with a shout

of relief we turned into the open meadows of Howse Pass, the lowest of the Continental Divide, 4800 feet. A tang of frost was in the air; a last tinge of the late northern twilight hung in the West; and the flaming fingers of the Aurora Borealis played across the sky. The weird display began with a bright green band across the zenith, for these northern Auroras are zenith, and not north horizon, phenomena. This beautiful green band persisted, unbroken and sharply defined, for a rare quarter hour. Then it broke up into multicolored flashes and bands and radiant pencils, gold, green and pink predominating in the scheme. Everything the marvelous northern Aurora could display in our honor, she did display, excepting only the curtains. Nature saves these to drape over the Arctic Circle in winter. It was ten of the clock: we had risen at three: a march to remember! A roaring fire was soon ablaze: and when did beans, bacon, bannock and butter—a swarm of B's somebody said—ever taste half so delicious? And then there was TEA! Everybody was wet. Everybody was cold. Everybody was supremely happy. We pitched the tents by feel and fire-light, crawled into our sleeping bags long past midnight, and woke to half an inch of ice on the water kettles and a hoar frost that whitened the landscape exquisitely. There is a crystal-line delicacy about frosted vegetation that is lacking to snow.

The descent from Howse Pass is through a slash mournful with standing and prostrate skeletons of noble trees and spangled with purple erigeron and larkspur, the infamous loco weed that gives your horses the drug habit and crazes them as hooch crazes

their human confrères; and there were blazing acres too of epilobium (fire weed). To right and rear was the unsullied snow field of the great tilted pyramid of Howse Peak; nearer and ahead was the enormous triple peak of Sarbach, the timber on its lower slopes seamed by avalanches. Far away in front, to northward, loomed Turret and Terrace, and the eye sweeping westward from them caught first sight of the monster Lyell and its enormous glacier flowing down in bold curves. At the extreme left was a heavily glaciated mountain, perhaps not so huge, but well worthy of note; for from that glacier sprang the turbid greenish river that glided at our feet with formidable swish of rapid water, with icy danger in its very look, as it rolled on and on through the gateway of the mountains to water a new civilization of the North. It was the Saskatchewan West Fork. A few miles ahead, before receiving the waters of the North Fork, it split up into many channels through a mile-wide bed of pebbles and sand, compelling constant fording, thirty-eight times the first day, forty-four the second. Perpendicular mountains walled in the left bank, and from their crags bands of white goats watched the train curiously, and one group of five big-horn sheep, led by a majestic old ram with horns fit to level the walls of Jericho, stared, motionless, at us from a green patch of grass and brush that clung somehow to the face of a precipice. Timber fringed the right bank of the river and along it toiled the infantry. A well defined trail was there to aid our progress, trodden deep by the passage of unnumbered game, and outlined plainly on either side by flocks of goat hair caught upon the bushes and

briars. The appearance of these thousands of tufts decorating the undergrowth strongly suggests that during the summer shedding the bands of goats parade along these narrow trails intentionally using the brambles as a natural comb to remove the loosened hair. And in the river bed marched the train, now over barren sand and stones, now through a crimson carpet of giant painted cups and epilobium. We in the wood were remorselessly trampling down snow-white cypripediums and strangely colored vetches, blue, white edged with blue, crimson, creamy yellow and all shades of pink, purple and lavender. They were like a garden of many-hued sweet peas. And when we came out from the forest to skirt the river bank, the moist places were tufted with the delicate little cotton balls of the pussy-toe rushes and the pale green, many-branched *equisetum*, beloved of the cayuses. When we commented to Sid on the fondness of the horses for this curious little rush, his reply was: "Yes, I've seen the *equus eat 'em!*" Latin held no terrors for Sid. The pack train and the infantry joined forces where the river rushed in an angry rapid between a great rock island, fairly draped with tufts of goat hair, and a bold hill of rock on the shore side. The passage was impossible. The fords had been getting worse and worse, and here was none at all. Another had apparently tried it before us and failed, for the track of a huge bear led up to the water and turned back. Muggins experimented and was promptly washed away, we thought forever; but the poor little fellow managed to pull himself ashore far below and on the other side, where, utterly exhausted and unable to rejoin us, he lay stretched out whining piteously.

The rock bluff appeared impassable even if we did succeed in fording farther up; but a level muskeg just above it looked as if it might cut through between the bluff and the foothills. It seemed the one chance and we tried it, the infantry making the ticklish ford perched a-top of the packs like mahouts on the elephants of some Indian Rajah. Luckily the bluff proved to have been once a rocky island and the muskeg outflanked both it and the rapid. We went into camp in comfort on the river bank, the borders of the muskeg affording abundant pasturage and its whole area affording abundant mosquitoes. It was a gay camp that night, for Muggins crept in unharmed and in the excess of his joy wagging violently not only his tail but his whole body back of his ears. It was a clear case of the tail wagging the dog. A gay camp it was, and a merry one, and we had the sauciest of mosquitoes to add zest to it. Camp Sassy-catch-one it remains to this day.

Trout swarmed in a sluggish stream near by in the muskeg, and happiness fairly bubbled in the beans. A profitable essay might be written on "Table Etiquette in the Open." There are three approved positions that may be assumed around the table cloth—a pack mantle spread upon the ground and disseminating slightly equine odors from its under side; for a pack mantle, let it be explained, is the final heavy duck covering spread over the entire pack when adjusted on the cayuse's back and lashed fast by the diamond hitch. One of these positions is that of the unspeakable Turk; another, the graceful (but hamperingly uncomfortable) pose of the triclinium of old Rome; while he who affects the third lies frankly out

upon his tummy and shifts from one elbow to the other as need requires. Anything that will not spill takes a short cut in serving, and the request, "Air-line me the bannock," should meet a prompt and liberal response. We grew so expert that even the preserve pails and the butter plate flew unerringly hither and thither, and not a single accident is of record. Banquets such as these far outclass Lucullus' own. Perfect congeniality, perfect freedom, perfect happiness, make the perfect feast.

"Wish I hadn't eaten my supper," complained the Distinguished Physicist that night. A chorus, "Why, Pete?" in anxious tones.

"So I could do it all over again."

"A meal is a social sacrament," he declares. And those who have dined in the spell of his golden conversation know his meaning.

The sun rose wonderfully over a peak outlined in snow, and we were off for a long, hard march down the Saskatchewan; especially hard for the infantry as the sun burned in the heavens. Timber and river bed alternated hardships, but we were uplifted and forgot the toil in the wondrous scenery. We were among the Great Ones of the Rocky Range. There was Mount Wilson, with its attendant vertical rock of Snifter. There was Survey Peak, bold and commanding. Turns of the way revealed Lyell again to us, and we passed close around the flanks of Sarbach. Ahead was splendid Murchison whose base was our goal for the day; and to the right towered glorious Forbes, a perfect needle-pointed cone of snow over 12,000 feet high. A lesser wonder was the work of a cyclone in the timber of the foothills; a perfect circle of de-



The Hell-Wagon. (See p. 74.)



Photo by F. B. Converse.

Dangerous Fording at the Ojinjah Wapta. (See p. 103.)

stroyed trees a quarter mile in diameter. The blast had struck down like the lightning and bounded off into space.

Now Ojinjah Wapta roared in our front like the great bear that its name signifies. Long unfordable in its lower reaches, it has now fortunately been split up into several channels by rock deltas of its own formation, and these channels, dangerous even in their reduced volume, may be forded in detail. That day they gave our brave little cayuses the ford of their lives. Its flood, clear and green, for it drains the beautiful Waterfowl Lakes and is not glacial, rushes down with tremendous power, damming the great Saskatchewan from bank to bank into a wall of muddy water six inches in height, and striking with a distinct recoil the shore that faces its discharge. Just below the mouth of the Ojinjah in a great eddy swirling partially clear by the mingling of the two streams, lie gigantic trout, great savage four-pounders; and to fight one of these warriors to a finish on a five-ounce rod is the sport of kings. It fell on that day that Nip, an ardent disciple of Dame Juliana, set herself earnestly to fishing at the edge of a pebble bar washed by the whirl of the eddy. Ere yet the sport had begun, warmed to drowsiness by the cloudless sun and fatigued by the march, she laid herself back restfully upon the pebbles, her reel hooked in the hollow of her arm, the rod across her body, the lure dancing with the boil of the current. In a brief moment she was asleep. It was a peaceful scene. Z-z-z-zip! In the thousandth of a second she was on her feet battling with the biggest trout she had ever been fast to. I am not of deep experience in the waking of

women, but I cannot believe that a woman ever before got so thoroughly awake so quickly.

An entire day we rested in this delightful spot. The river teemed with these monster trout: Grouse side-stepped out of our way in the forest. And what a noble vista to delight the eye; all the Great Ones visible at once, even the long concealed Howse Peak, with a new one added in the distant view of Pyramid Peak, soon to be seen in all its grandeur as we skirted the lake at its base. True, mosquitoes, green-eyed bulldogs and sand flies were rampant and made the cayuse band hug the lee of the smudges; but when one has head nets and tent nets, who cares? It is a great satisfaction, too, to foil the villain, either in a play or in life; and we could gleefully enjoy the hungry disappointment we fancied we could read in the faces of the famished swarm who had hummed us to sleep at night and were lined up on the tent net in the morning.

Thus far we had been in the unknown wilderness. The country from the mouth of Ojinjah Wapta is somewhat better known, having been traversed several times by trail parties. The route is of rare beauty, and magnificence. Starting from Camp Ojinjah we followed in the main the line of the canyon of the river, which we had unfortunately no time to visit. Shortly after leaving camp we were lucky enough to see a wolverene playing in the water, a creature seen in daylight "but once in a blue moon," as Sid put it, the fiercest beast in North America and the cunningest. He it is who follows the trapper on his lines, springs the traps with devilish ingenuity, tears to pieces the furs already trapped and fights to the death if

discovered. One trapper thus epigrammatically described to me the uncompromising ferocity of the wolverene: "His face is always toward you." He is a gigantic weasel, with all the bloody propensities of the tribe. Imagine a weasel, big as a setter dog, dark chocolate brown with yellowish brown markings, a pale crescent over each eye giving him a most sinister expression; endow your weasel with all of Mary Magdalene's seven devils and a few more for good measure, and you have the wolverene.

Past the beautiful Waterfowl Lakes we marched, where Pyramid Peak lifts its sphinx-like head 11,000 feet from the water of the lower lake. Beside it is Bow Peak in pale gray stratified limestone, the different uneven shelves beautifully outlined in strips of snow. Grand snow-covered peaks line the lakes on both sides, and we camped just at the foot of the upper lakes in a choice and lovely spot known to the Indians as Yahee Imne—Between the Lakes—where in front is the clear green water, beyond it a formidable barrier of gray rock and snow, and behind the camp site the goat-haunted twin peak of Bungalow Mountain, a curiously misplaced peak of red sandstone lifting itself impudently up among its dignified neighbors of gray limestone, and offering a singular example of the effect of weathering in mountain architecture.

Bow Pass, 6700 feet, was now our objective, and delightful Bow Lake—Umchumbaba Imne—abounding with trout, and celebrated for the superb glacier and snow field that feed it. The trail to the summit of the pass, until we struck the dreadful burned timber just below the crest, was a bed of flowers, and the

Franklin grouse, better known as fool hens, trotted to one side tame as chickens as we passed. Once we even found her egg in the middle of the trail.

"How do you suppose," queried Cupid, "that that fool hen's egg came to be in the trail?"

"That's easy; the fool hen mislaid it," was the inconsiderate retort.

Bow Pass is a water-soaked meadow with small circular ponds actually elevated above the general level of the soil like geyser basins. The suggestion of circus rings was irresistible; but they were wet ones, and you looked for the clown exhibiting a hippopotamus or some other amphibian. In truth the whole land—that is, the soil upon the rock framework—is a vast sponge from which Nature gently presses rivers to water the land a thousand miles away. One reason I love to travel these northern mountains is that one never suffers from thirst. It is possible to stoop almost anywhere and enjoy an icy drink. It is to the mountains that we must go for the beginning and for the ending of life. These glorious ranges are the real sources of life for vast acres of the continent. But the glaciers are steadily receding and as sources of water supply they will disappear unless, as in the case of the Wenkchemna, they resume their active phase. Will the grim processes of world-decay ever give us here the dreadful waterless death of the Mogollons?

The Pass slopes away to the lake far below, an inspiring sight with the tremendous Bow Glacier cascading towards its head and ranges of great peaks reaching away into the distance to the rear slopes of the Wahputiks, and, lying in the background, the Wahputik Ice Field, mother of glaciers. The ap-

proaches to Bow Lake make toilsome plodding. "Is there any name," some one asked Sid, "for this soft mossy ground that isn't wet like muskeg?"

"Yes," he replied promptly, "but it isn't mentioned in public."

Bow Lake looms large in the life of Sid Unwin. We had covered the long slope to the Lake, turned the hobbled cayuses out to graze and performed all the tasks of a well organized camp; and as the light paled we sat in luxurious idleness and invited our souls. The peaks that walled in the Lake with castellated ramparts of rock and snow gleamed roseate in the afterglow and were wondrously reflected in the untroubled mirror of the water. Twilight faded into dusk; dusk into darkness. The deep silence that the mystery of the wilderness brings with it was upon us, complete and reminiscent. Sid rose from the group and touched a match to the camp fire already built. It flared out over the lake, making the darkness visible.

"I don't like this place," explained Sid, as he took his seat in the circle after setting a pot of water to boil for the night-cap cup of tea, "it gives me the shivers."

"Why?" we questioned in chorus. It was a red-letter night when Sid could be induced to spin a yarn by the fire.

"I came nearer death here than I shall ever come again and live," he said seriously. "It was while I was trapping. I was coming on snowshoes from my trapping cabin on Waterfowl Lake to my cabin on the Bow—same march we had to-day. The weather was beautifully clear and everything was under snow; so different from to-day with all this wealth of flowers,

but just as beautiful. In the wood everything that snow can do was done; there were tufted trees, snow mushrooms, curl-edged drifts—Oh! it was a marvel. I had my pack of fur and stuff, about seventy pounds, and my rifle. Fool hens were plenty, and for fresh meat I had shot the heads off eight of them and hung them to my pack. Night overtook me; but that made no difference, as there are no wolves in the region. When I hit the crest of the pass, the lake and the whole landscape was glistening like burnished silver under the full moon. I thought I had never seen such beauty. It was magnificent snowshoeing down the long slope, and I struck a great pace. It wasn't so very cold, only about twenty below zero; but it had been that way for days and the lake looked a solid sheet of snow-covered ice as safe as a prairie. It was late and I wanted to get to the cabin, so, like a fool, I slid out on the lake for a short cut. No trapper ever has any right to get in a hurry. I was running as fast as the racquettes would carry me when I struck a place where the snow covered a soft spot; over a big spring in the bottom of the lake, I suppose. Cr-r-ack! went the ice, the horriddest sound I ever heard, and in I went. I spread out my arms instinctively and caught myself on the edges of the hole. My rifle flew from my grip and went spinning away over the ice. I was sweating at every pore from my violent exercise, and the chill was terrible: for a second I couldn't breathe. Slowly I pulled myself, pack and all, out on the ice, and broke through again, this time going down over my head. How I came up with all that weight on me, I don't know; nor why I didn't come up under the ice; but come up I did.

I felt for a minute that it was all over. Then it came to me that I just couldn't die yet. I'm young, and life is good. That awful pack weighted me like lead, but I got my arms out on the ice and pulled myself up. I crawled full length away from the hole to my rifle; this time the ice held. I got my rifle and started on the run for the shore. I began to freeze instantly. When I reached shore I made for a big old spruce tree. You know how the lower branches of a spruce die as the tree grows and curl down and in toward the trunk so that they are always dry. My fingers were stiff and shaking, but I forced them to get a match. 'Keep your matches in a water proof case and always in reach,' is the first commandment for a man in the woods. How I lit that match or what I struck it on, I don't know, but I did strike it somewhere and it didn't go out. I touched it to the dry spruce twigs and they blazed. In a second the whole tree burst into flames. Even in my desperation I seem to have had sense enough to choose an isolated tree that wouldn't set the forest on fire. We men of the woods, I sometimes think, develop an instinct like animals instead of always acting rationally. I broke more twigs and piled them up. I lit them from the burning tree and soon had a fire I could control. But I was freezing rapidly. The numbness felt good, too, for it stopped the suffering from the cold. But somehow it had become a point of honor with me not to yield. I built my fire to a roaring blaze and then undressed to the buff—twenty below it was, you remember. I dried one garment at a time and put it on, until I was dressed and warm. Then I shouldered my pack and the fool hens, all now frozen solid, took my rifle

and started off again. This time I made the cabin. As I closed the door and shut out that cruel cold, I think it was the greatest moment of my life. I soon had a roaring blaze in the fireplace, for of course it was fixed all ready to light. Then the reaction came. I was weak as a kitten. I crawled around the cabin floor, for I couldn't walk. But I managed to make a great pot of steaming tea, the thing a cold, exhausted man needs most, and I drank a tin of it. Then I dressed and cooked my fool hens. You may know how much of me was gone when I tell you I cooked and ate all those grouse and drank the whole pot of tea. Then I slept twenty hours."

"No I wasn't a bit the worse for my ducking."

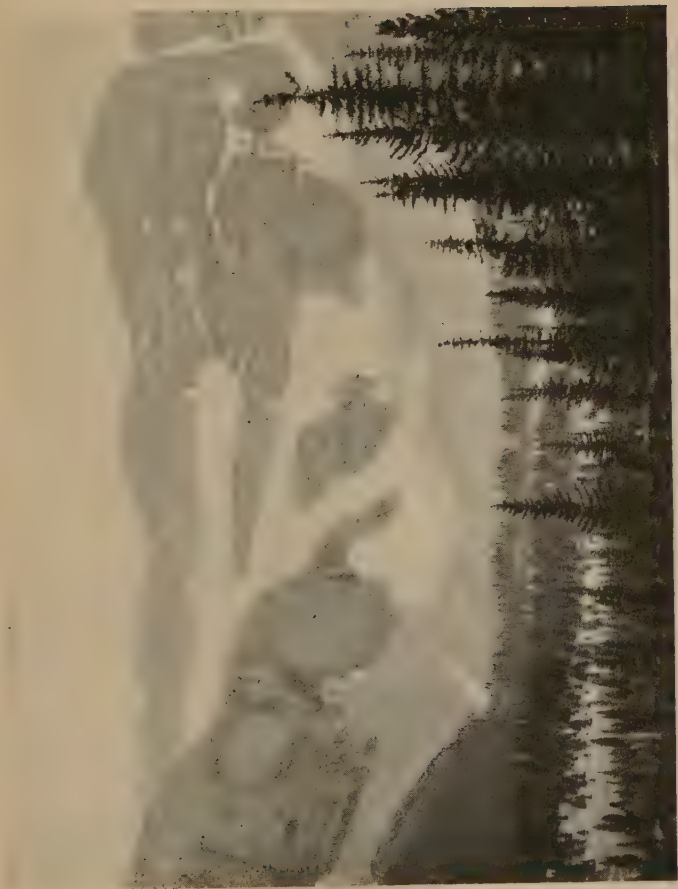
"Do I go around a lake now in winter? Well, usually. Sometimes, when I'm sure of the ice I cross."

"How did I remember to get my rifle when I crawled out? In the wilderness a man forgets only once: He never gets a second chance. Ha! the teapot looks like an old friend. Have some, Robinson Crusoe?"

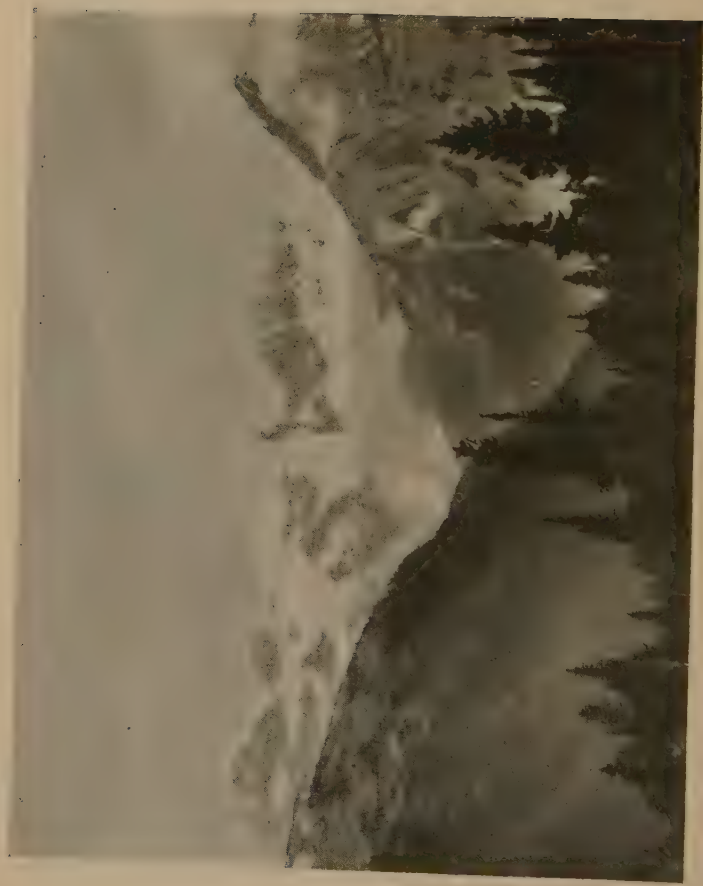
And a deep voice made answer: "Oduch whap-hi" (lots of tea); "gallonss of it, gallonss, gallonss!"

And then nobody had anything else to say; we were too busy thinking, so we crept away silently to bed.

The march out from Bow Lake was made in the bed of the lake close along the shore, to avoid the bottomless muskegs of the bank. At the lower end of the lake we turned sharply up the mountain side out of the accursed muskeg and skirted along it, obtaining a magnificent view of the Crowfoot Glacier, unique among the glaciers of the world. This enormous triple-branched river of blue ice with its marvelous eddy, actually flowing uphill, has no counterpart nor



Crowfoot Glacier. (See p. 110.)



Mount Mummery. (See p. 92.)

rival on earth. Nowhere is the viscosity of ice so well illustrated.

Forced at last to descend to the Bow River, we camped for the last camp of the expedition, among hungry, humming hordes of mosquitoes, and got bites impartially from them and from the Dolly Varden trout in the swift stream. The distribution of trout species in the Northland is a most interesting problem. So far as we could see, it obeyed no law. Everywhere different species were met with in contiguous, or even in connecting waters. In this particular instance Bow River and Bow Lake, its source, are inhabited by different species, and the latter not by exclusively lacustrine forms.

We marched out of Mosquito Camp that last morning in a drenching pour of rain, but everyone was singing. The heart-sun was shining just the same. Sid smiled appreciatively: "Many a party would blame me even for the weather," he said.

It was a real pity for that rain, for it cut us out from some superb scenery, the Wahputik Range and the strangely weathered Dolomites. We obtained occasional tantalizing glimpses of magnificence through rifts in the low-hanging, leaky clouds. We plunged once more into the awful muskegs of the Bow; and here the word "awful" is not rhetoric. Those afoot sank above the ankles at every step. The horses frequently pitched to the shoulder. The whole land quaked like an earth tremor. Here it was that we discovered the value of Splash. Splash was a big pinto mare with a bald face and a white eye. She is, I believe, one of the most accomplished buck-and-wing dancers in America, twice as skilful as any of her human

competitors, for she has twice as many feet. And she does it so cheerfully, so spontaneously, so utterly without malice, that you simply can't lose your temper, and so smoothly and rhythmically that there is no need even to lose your stirrup, if you can ride even a little bit. The desperately bad trail caused the pack to lag and stray. But Splash was equal to the occasion.

"Bite 'em, Splash!"

And at the word, back would go those chocolate colored ears, and Splash darted at the laggard and inflicted so severe a bite at the root of the tail that with a squeal of pain the victim took his place in line and plugged sturdily along.

All things, however, end; and so did this muskeg, but not before Cupid had gracefully somersaulted from a falling horse and dived head first into the watery mess. She came up a sight, but grinning and unhurt. The end of that muskeg was worse than the muskeg itself for a full mile, for it was bushwhacking of the worst sort, leaping, clambering, cutting; the worst of the entire trip. But at last we struck the high trail, and pulled into Laggan weary, wet and happy. We were photographed by swell loafers and tenderfeet. We politely answered impertinent questions from total strangers. I believe some of us kissed Muggins. I know that all of us hugged Sid and invoked blessings on him.

And thus—the curtain.

CHAPTER VI

WINDOW MOUNTAIN, ASSINIBOINE AND THE COUNTRY OF THE SPRAY

The Window of the Gods. Back-trailing the cayuses. The Simpson Summit. Pocketed in down timber. Camping in storm. The side-hill gouger. The descent to the Simpson. The gophers. Gnome Valley. Assiniboine in storm. Heavy snow. The camp fire. Ephraim. Jumping socks. The Spirit of the Mountains. Clear at last. Wonderful beauty of the Assiniboine Arc. Assiniboine by moonlight. Return via the Spray Country. A wet march. Fire-swept timber. Hornets. Trout. Spray Lakes.

THIS time, as the trail trip of the season, we had set our hearts on Mount Assiniboine, "the Matterhorn of America." It was while Sid and I were making up 'grub' orders and hustling around the streets of the pretty town of Banff in its setting of snow-clad peaks that luck opened wide for us the Window of the Gods by throwing our path across the path of Thomas Wilson. You don't know "Tom" Wilson? Well, you miss much. He it was who discovered the famed Yoho Valley and more other marvels out there than it is safe to say; and now in his hospitable home in Banff he will charm the hours away for his friends and guests with many a 'thriller' of the mountain and forest.

"So you're going to Assiniboine," he said when we had told him our plans. "Why don't you look, on the way, for the big hole through the mountain?"

We were all ears in a trice. We knew only of solid mountains, and we told him so.

"Well, you have a chance for something new," he continued. "I saw it once myself, by a mere chance. I happened to be on the Healy Creek trail, going down to Assiniboine, and I was looking carelessly at what I took to be a snow patch high up near the summit of a mountain near Mount Bourgeau and across the creek from it. I was amazed to see, through my snow patch, a cloud drifting past behind the mountain. Then I knew it was a natural tunnel. It's pretty high, and something of a climb; but it has never been described, mapped or photographed. I have never visited it since I first saw it: didn't visit it at all, in fact; only took a passing glance at it—and it is barely possible that my eyes fooled me that time.

"It'll be a bit hard to find, especially as you happen to be looking for it; for all the best finds in the mountains come as surprises—at least, all of mine have done so, and the biggest surprise of them all was the Yoho. Look hard along the range with a good glass, and examine every snow patch minutely. Take an extra day, if you need it. If there is really a tunnel there—and I'm convinced there is—it will repay your trouble."

Now new things, geographically, are scarce enough, and the lure of the unknown is a magnet. So this strange freak of Nature became at once the goal of our ambitions and gave zest to the preparations.

Finally all was ready "to the last button"—that fateful phrase that started a war—and our cavalcade was ready to move. The last diamond hitch was thrown, the last pull taken at the saddle cinches—

"winding up," they call it—and our pack train, of meek-looking, mischief-brewing, cayuses filed away through Banff across the beautiful Bow River, bound for the heart of the wilderness and stared at, open-mouthed and wide-eyed, by each and every specimen of the tourist species that had ventured away from the hotel piazzas.

"Aw, I say, stop!" called out, in agonized Britishisms, a chap in tweeds who was struggling with a refractory tripod. "*Won't* you wyte a bit till I get my camera ready?"

We rode straight forward like a circus parade, feeling, in our dress of the woods, as I should fancy the tinselled knights and ladies of the real circus feel on parade—ready to 'cuss' the whole gaping crowd. The camera fiend, seeing the opportunity of a lifetime fading away, pursued us full speed ahead struggling still with the tripod and yelling excitedly, "Aw, now I s'y! Stop! Stop! It'll tyke but a moment, doncha know!" That picture was never taken, and a last glance showed him still wrestling with that take-down tripod.

We filed away up the valley of the Bow, gorgeous mountains towering on every hand. Cascade, Rundle, Sulphur, Stony Squaw, looked down on us, Mount Edith proudly thrust her mighty *aiguille* far into space, as though piercing the sky with a giant sword blade. Far in front rose Mount Massive's snowy crest, around whose base we would march. It was sweet to be alive, and yesterday and to-morrow were banished from our souls. Now Sid turned sharply from the road into a forest of jack-pines, the trail dimly traceable as a mere depression beneath our feet and marked

by ancient blazes on the tree trunks, smearily overlaid with the thickly exuding gum wherewith Nature practices surgery. Nature heals her wounds swiftly, but the scars of them are never obliterated. Ancient and long-abandoned trails, though overgrown with every low growth of the forest floor, remain an open route-map to the practised eye, a faint, depressed grassy ribbon.

On plodded the train through the jack-pines, with their squirrel-tail foliage, densely covering an ancient moraine and replacing the original forest ages ago burned away. Tall skeletons of old giants still rose here and there, on one of them the great eagle's nest, a landmark of that trail for many years, and to it the great golden birds annually return. The second growth was amazingly dense, and a fending arm was nearly always before the face to ward off the stinging strike of the long waving fronds. Primal silence reigned about us. The wilderness had enfolded us like a mist and had gathered us to itself.

We reached the crest of the moraine. Away before us opened the valley of the Bow sweeping magnificently up to the Great Divide and walled in by formidable peaks and fields of ice and snow perpetual. To the left the valley of Healy Creek was revealed, debouching into Bow Valley around the base of the mighty Bourgeau looming close in our front, and showing to perfection the huge glacier bowls of its northern face. Descending from the moraine we forded the deep, swift creek whose banks are eroded almost to perpendicularity; and up them the cayuses scrambled, reaching ahead as far as they could with the fore feet and bringing up the hind feet in a sudden spasmodic

leap that must not take one unawares. The creek here flows pure and cold and troutful through a fine flat carpeted with grass and mosses, and with many a clump of white birches. It sweeps around the flank of Bourgeau through a magnificent canyon, up the sides of which the trail twists in zigzag sinuosities.

These old Indian trails of the northland, the ancient lines of aboriginal tribal intercommunication whether for peaceful trade or for warring foray, bear singular testimony to the Indian's instinct for geographical contour and for direction. Of course, by every imaginable serpentine twist they avoid obstacles rather than incur the labor of removing them—an impossible task with the crude tools of old—but in general they trend straight to their objective as far as the land relief forms permit. The trails became the highways for the *coureurs de bois* of the old fur companies, and they remain to-day the best and shortest paths of the wild. The Indian had the railway engineer's flair for a route; and of his gifts to modern life—the trail, the moccasin, the tipi and the canoe—the first and the last will endure forever, necessities of barbarism become delights of civilization.

The cayuses toiled patiently "onward and upward," as the revivalist hath it, high and still higher, the younger horses scraping recklessly through the trees, while the older ones skilfully threaded the maze, wiggling their ears with delight when they saved fifty feet of trail by a short cut. The timber grew dense around us, giving grateful shade from a beating sun. Shade temperature is always low in the high mountains. This midday sun heat is fiercely reflected from snow surfaces, and there are well authenticated in-

stances of sun-stroke on a glacier. Here, too, in places the fire curse had spared a grove of noble trees which rose dark and stately above the yellow green of the intruding jack-pines. How curious that burned areas are never reforested by the same species that originally grew in them. Flowers, usually to be seen in profusion, were notably absent here; a few pale blue asters the only reminder of the riot of color generally seen. The jack-pines were growing in a tangle of down timber that was a surprise even to the experienced. There were traces of three fires, and three generations of fallen trunks lay over each other inextricable in their confusion.

The canyon rim at last! We were six thousand feet in the air. Glory be! What a view! Mountains, mountains, mountains.

Oh, the wild grandeur of it all! Now we could understand why the Greeks, that artist nation of all the ages, adopted a mountain top as their conception of Heaven. Every glass was focussed on the range across the canyon for some sign of the rumored tunnel, for we were near where the marvel was said to be. But every fancied window in the great wall resolved itself into a patch of snow. Scanning every inch of the mountain we came at last to a charming little flat far up on the slopes of Bourgeau, richly grassed and with a streamlet of icy water tumbling down from the high snows. "Here we camp," calls Sid; and in a trice each one leaps from the saddle and falls to the allotted task. This group has camped together before and knows what to do. Sid and Robinson Crusoe pull away diamond hitches and saddle cinches. If packing were as swift a task as unpacking, it would be a joy. The

cayuses are hobbled, several of them belled, and they are turned loose to graze and drink their fill. In an instant every rogue of them is rolling in luxury on the soft grass, heels kicking wildly in air. Meanwhile Rosemary kindles the cook fire and pulls the tea from the grub box which has been carried by a great bay horse most appropriately named Kitchener—an apparent case of ætiological nomenclature. In this miracle-box the tea is always on top, for it is the first want of the wild. Another brings pails of water and then pitches tents and cuts balsam while Nip and Corkie build the beds and prepare to set up house-keeping by unpacking personal belongings.

“Tea!” calls Rosemary. In a moment we have thrown ourselves on the ground, a merry group about the spread pack-mantle, and sip the delicious beverage, the universal solvent for fatigue, the greatest comfort and craving of the man in the woods. If poets ever ‘hiked,’ sonnets to tea would outnumber those to love.

Camps on a pack-train journey, as I have before said, must be regulated absolutely by food and water for the horses. In the wilderness they mean not merely transportation and comfort but life itself. They and their welfare must therefore take precedence of mere human beings—po’ white trash—at every moment. So the marches usually end early in the afternoon. Then the party is free to seek pleasure each in his own way, even if that way is being just delightfully, sinfully lazy. Nothing can be more perfectly soul satisfying than these charming “afternoons off” after a hard day of hitting the trail. It is life itself to feast on all the beauty of the ranges and peaks around you,

to taste the joy of close companionship with your dearest friends in a world all your own. The strifes and struggles and competitions and rivalries of existence are forgotten, and peace is over all.

This particular afternoon off was to be spent looking for the window. It could not be behind us; our watch had been too keen for that. So we set off up the trail watching the peaks across the roaring Healy Creek as a cat watches for a mouse. Far above us towered Bourgeau, snow-crowned and magnificent in a color scheme of white snow and yellowish gray cliff. Up toward the precipices of the peak proper, away from the rim of the Healy canyon, swept the continuation of the slope we traversed; beautiful smooth stretches of soft bright green grass, a few clumps of dark spruces—for we were just at timber line—and the whole leading up to rounded outcrops of reddish sandstones from which the sheer pale crags shot up in the unmelting snow. It was a landscape not common in the Rockies, peculiarly Tyrolese. The slopes to the peaks across the creek the fires had spared, and dense virgin timber, balsam and spruce and Engelmann's fir, clothed the steep incline from the bank of the creek far below us to our own level at timber line. Suddenly Robinson Crusoe reached for the binoculars and gazed intently at a group of snow patches on the peak facing us. The topmost patch of them all was almost circular.

"There's the window!" he exclaimed.

And there it was, a veritable window for the mountain gods. There was no mistaking it now. Pierced completely through the peak from sky to sky was a tunnel. Yet so closely did the pale sky seen through it

resemble a patch of snow, that to one not seeking it only the merest accident could have identified it as an opening in the rock. Our search had been rewarded, and we had proper little thrills, all of us. We could now flatter ourselves that we had actually discovered something. It wasn't the Pole, of course. It wasn't even the Honest Man whom Diogenes, lantern in hand, sought so long and failed in the quest. It was just a perfectly good hole in a great big mountain that nobody else had found. We examined the mountain carefully, picked out a route of ascent and hustled back to camp to prepare a feast in honor of the occasion. Sid tossed flap-jacks for us, an accomplishment that is the despair of the tenderfoot: and Sid's flap-jacks, by the way, with maple syrup—oh, say!

Around the crackling camp fire the window was the sole object of discussion. We had, as Sid expressed it, "all kinds of grub," so that we could well afford to lie over a day and make the ascent. We turned in under the sparkling stars eager for the climb.

Bright and early the next morning four of us were off for the mountain. The day was perfect, barring a pervading smoky haze from distant forest fires, which dimmed the farthest peaks and made long distance photography out of the question; for though the human eye is able fairly to penetrate such a haze, the eye of the camera fails. We had a long drop to Healy Creek, nearly three thousand feet. It was steep, but through rather open timber, and it presented no difficulties. Arrived at Healy Creek, Sid felled a tree across it for a 'monkey bridge.' Once across, we plunged into a thicket of dwarf willows about four feet high, clothing a steep slope and all turned down-

ward by the pressure of the winter snows. It was like struggling to get out of a rat trap against the converging wires.

After nearly a thousand feet of rat trap, the willows gradually diminishing in size with the increase in the altitude until they entirely disappeared, we had some smooth grassy slopes for a while and then a bit of firm rock, in the scant soil-patches of which grew the lovely pale pea green watered silk cushions of the Alpine pinks. Above the solid rock was a long stretch of broken talus and disintegrated, frost-rent scree lying at as steep an angle as broken rock can lie.

As we puffed and panted up this long unstable incline—for a walkable slope is a more severe tax on wind and heart than rock cliff or ice-step climbing, since the progress is faster—it slipped and slid and rolled under us in most wearying and exasperating fashion. At the top of the scree the real climbing began, practically vertical for a few hundred feet. The snow was nothing serious, for it was well packed and steps and hand holds could readily be kicked or cut in it. But the rocks were of the worst, slippery with the slime of a constant drip, frightfully weathered and loose. Here we were compelled to resort to the rope in pairs, and the front man on the rope was compelled to rain projectiles on the one behind him, who bowed to the storm and effaced himself to flatness against the crumbling wall in the hope that at least the larger missiles would bound over his head. Our scheme of roping in pairs considerably lessened the danger, for one pair could keep well out of range to the side, while the others climbed. Every hand hold had to be tested, and three out of five broke away in the testing.

But we stood at last on the great sill of the Window of the Gods, the first to set foot on the floor of this wonderful tunnel. It was a triumph; a small, and unimportant one, I grant, in comparison with real feats of mountaineering, but we could be pardoned a bit of pride in our good fortune. Only the mountain gods and the lesser Oread folk of myth and legend had enjoyed from our vantage point this vista of snow-clad peaks and range succeeding range to limit of vision. No wonder the men of old peopled the mountains with supernal beings great and small. No wonder that Zeus, father of gods and men, dwelt in the long gone past upon a mountain crest. Great mountains exert upon the spirits of men a certain subtle influence, awe-inspiring, solemn, as though from another and a greater world. The exultation of an ascent is pleasure of a high order, never mere 'fun.' You cannot be trifling, you cannot be flippant on a great mountain.

We looked out through the window upon a mountain world. Plains and prairies were inconceivable things, blotted from the memory. To the north Bourgeau loomed close and mighty. Beyond him was a sea of huge peaks heaped in wild confusion. To the south, where we had cherished a hope that we might see Assiniboine, the goal of our expedition, the view was cut off by a tremendous triple peak of curious sky line walling in a deep depression, a glacier bowl, as these basins are termed, once brimming with blue ice rending and tearing and grinding fine the solid rock. The sky line of this peak that frowned down on the now empty bowl was most singularly broken and weathered into strange fantastic shapes. Robinson

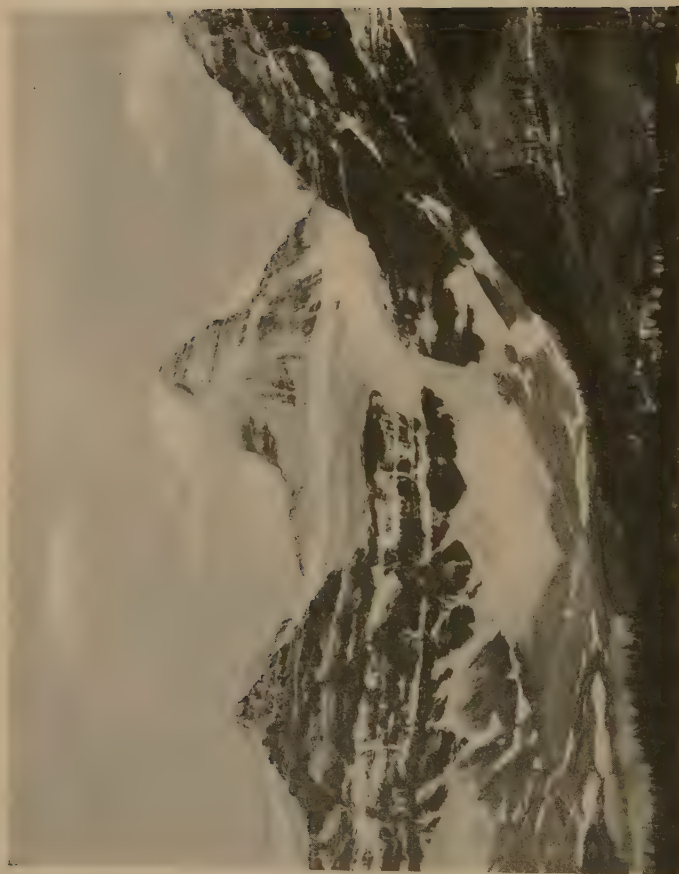
Crusoe, who is always "seeing things" in mountain forms dubbed the peak "The Old Man Kissing his Poodle." None of the rest of us saw anything but a jagged silhouette of broken rock, but that was probably due to insufficient development of the artistic sense.

We spent in this strange freak of nature two snow white hours, in the metaphor of ancient Rome, and exercised the rights of discovery by naming the peak Window Mountain, leaving also a record of our climb buried in a small cairn. Window Mountain rises about fifteen miles southwest of Banff, and it is a commentary on the wildness of the route that it should lie so close and for so long escape notice. The tunnel pierces the mountain about two hundred feet below the actual crest, about ten thousand feet above sea level and four thousand feet above Healy Creek. It is almost a true cylinder about fifty feet in diameter and sixty in length, showing to what a remarkable knife-edge the mountain has narrowed. The rock in which it occurs is a yellowish gray limestone; and the tunnel seems to have been at one time a cavern, such as are common enough in limestone formations. The rear wall probably then fell away either in some tremendous cataclysm or by slow disintegration, leaving the tunnel. Indeed, the long scree slope and the heavy talus constitute fair evidence of this.

But it was time to descend, a task we had tried to forget. It was a work of infinite caution to wriggle down over those vertical, slippery, crumbling rocks and over the now soft snow to the top of the scree. But all's well that ends well; and steep scree, diabolical as it is in the ascent, is easy for the descending climber.



In the Window. (See p. 123.)



Mount Assiniboine. (See p. 142.)

Each step you take, a half dozen cubic yards start with you and you get a real nice ride for as many yards linear. When it stops, take another bound. So long as your scree slope doesn't lead to a precipice, it's exhilarating, easy and swift. Willows sloping with you are also much different from willows sloping against you, and we were soon at Healy Creek happy as clams at high tide, a mild achievement behind us and Assiniboine still before us.

On a smooth-blazed tree by the creek still another record of the climb was inscribed. Then came a joyous dash along the trail to camp, where our arrival was enthusiastically welcomed and where we found that six of our nine cayuses, heaven-abandoned children of Belial, had conspired together, as these evil beings will, and had vanished.

And Assiniboine forty miles away!

Sid scratched his head for a second or two in deep thought, and then relaxed the tension of his soul with a linguistic performance of much elegance and force of expression. He started at once in pursuit of the band, tracking them in impossible places with more than Indian skill. But the villains had a long start and, hobbled though they were, had covered more than ten miles of the trail to Banff when headed. One never ceases to wonder at the speed a band of hobbled cayuses can make when they are really in earnest in pursuit of sin. The shackled forefeet force the gait into the comical rock of the hobby-horse, but they clear all obstacles and have been known to swim deep and swift rivers. For the soul of you, you can't understand it; it is the same mystery that attaches to performances in the hobble skirt. The painful progress

of a hobbled cayuse at pasture, when you are looking on, must be a mere bluff; for your experienced cayuse is as full of dark ways and vain tricks as any almondeyed Son of Heaven that ever lived. And your real old seasoned sinner of the pack organizes regular conspiracies, which are respectfully commended to the attention of the study table wiseacres who maintain that animals cannot reason. One such was in our bunch this season, old Silver. Horses, like men, have their likes and dislikes, and Silver was unpopular. Many a sly kick and bite came his way. But when he had conceived an evil thought he would go up apologetically to one of his enemies, whinnying low and seductively, and the pair would stand for five minutes rubbing their heads caressingly over each other's neck and withers. When there seemed to be a thorough understanding, Silver would insidiously approach another of the band, until five or six of them sneaked off into the timber and trailed away "on their own" for miles. It finally became necessary to picket Silver, and the trouble ceased at once.

It was ten of the clock when Sid finally herded the bunch back, tethered the chief offenders, and, wet and weary, dried out at the camp fire to the accompaniment of the blessed tea. He had done over twenty-five miles afoot over mountains and through streams, most of the distance on the run, at the end of a hard day's climb. Small wonder that to the dark-skinned children of the forest, he was Mustiyeh No-houngah, The Rabbit Running.

Dawn found us hustling the task of striking tents in a hard white frost which vanished as by magic when the sun topped the ranges and poured into the canyon.

The trail dropped steeply from the canyon rim to the level of Healy Creek, through heavy virgin timber. In the moist, shaded creek bottom the fires had never wrought their wreck and there was almost tropic luxuriance. Snow white cornus, delicate pink *linnea*, exquisitely fragrant, and the great golden sunbursts of the arnica starred a soft cushion of deepest mosses whose fronds were like small ferns.

The ascent to the Simpson Summit was long and severe. Up, up, up toiled the panting pack, the timber showing but little decrease in size with the altitude, for this was the main Continental Divide, offering easy access to the warm, moisture-laden Chinook winds; and "where the Chinook blows the timber grows." The first sign of the timber line was the breaking up of the continuous forest into clumps, beautiful light green larches replacing the dark spruces and firs. Lovely little meadows opened before us, with clear flowing rivulets, much appreciated by the tired and hungry cayuses: Kicking Buck indeed lay down under his pack in the grass and planned a luncheon which was rudely interrupted by a kick in the ribs. It was an ideal camp ground, and tipi poles set up by the stream told of previous halts; but there was no rest for us there, and the sky line showed the true summit higher up. These groups of tipi poles set in position at various desirable camping spots illustrate one of the unwritten laws of the wilderness. The slender poles are often hard to obtain, and, of course, still more difficult to transport, so they are left on the camp sites with the full understanding that they will be safe. Any traveler of the trail is free to use them, but none, Indian or paleface, dreams of

taking them away; and he who would destroy or burn one is an outlaw.

Forward, then, through the lush grasses of the slope, over an Oriental carpet of crimson and gold and blue and white; painted cups in every shade of red, arnica and senecio for the gold, beautiful blue veronicas and huge anemones two inches across, some still blooming white and pure, waving and nodding in the winds whose name they bear, others showing the hairlike tufted heads of seed time, picturesquely called "gopher hay." As we passed the sky line the glory of it all burst suddenly upon us. This is a truly wonderful pass, a rolling prairie at seventy-eight hundred feet, blazing with flowers, splendidly grassed and ideal as a big game country. The wary big-horn and the snow-white goat make of it their favorite resort. It is honeycombed with gopher holes, sad traps for careless horses or over-speedy riders; and many of the burrows are dug out deep and wide, for your Uncle Ephraim, the grizzly bear, lives there and he is exceeding fond of gopher meat.

Late snow drifts here and there still gleamed among the grass and flowers. Beautiful lakes in miniature on the lofty plateau mirrored the floating clouds; toy lakes they were, as though the pass were some vast landscape garden of the mountain gods; and in the lakes rose tiny islands of bare rock, artificial looking in their diminutive beauty. In a circle about us grandeur ran riot. Enormous peaks, black precipices, blue glaciers, white snow fields, vied with each other in splendor. And far away to the southward, towering above the world to the very arches of the sky, magnified and unearthly in the light fire-haze, Assiniboine

rose, King of them all. It was our first glimpse of the great peak. The little cavalcade broke ranks in its enthusiasm, each riding to secure the view that most appealed—much to the confusion of the pack animals who did not know which rider to follow and solved the problem by going where they pleased. But the chaos was only for a moment. Rosemary proved herself a born herd-rider by rounding up the renegades with a bit of skilful horsemanship and much exhortation delivered in approved accents but with sadly inadequate vocabulary. For example, when Kootenai was peculiarly obstreperous and to wandering inclined, Rosemary merely amused him (and all the rest of us) by the angry denunciation,

“You *black pill*! Get back into line.”

Sid's epithets and pet-names would have coruscated around the laid-back ears of the erring one like sparklers on a Fourth-of-July night—and, what is more, the cayuse would have given heed. But this scattering of the pack horses always occurs in high Alpine park lands, with the result that the trail vanishes completely and must be picked up where it leaves the plateau.

A few minutes' halt was allowed, to feast the spirit on this remarkable scene, a mountain-walled prairie at the altitude of a fair-sized peak. The sun shone brilliantly, the nearer snows glittering like diamonds in its rays. The pure air was an intoxication, every breath of it an atmospheric cocktail deliciously exhilarating. We were spending an hour on the upper planes of life.

“Time to move on!” And now it is unknown country to us all; even Sid had never visited the

great mountain nor traversed this pass, and there was the task before us of picking up the faded-out trail. This region was practically unsurveyed and therefore most inadequately mapped; and after much poring over one of these guess-work guides to travel, we turned down a depression that looked like a trail gently sloping away from the left side of the plateau. It was so perfectly natural a *débouchure* that we looked for the trail to reappear momentarily. A few steps, and we were in the upper timber, and still no trail. An open glade appeared farther on, and by leaping and scrambling over a confusion of logs we gained it. A well-defined trail showed, which a further examination soon proved to be a game trail. Then a long halt while Sid and Robinson Crusoe made wide detours in search of the true trail. It was useless; and as the day was declining and we were in the densest of virgin timber, on an almost vertical mountain side, it was absolutely necessary to move *somewhere*. Here came in play Sid's magnificent sense of direction and knowledge of mountains—not of these mountains, for he had never been in them, but of mountains in general, the trend of slopes and the way mountains must behave in order to be normal mountains at all. We zigzagged down the heavily timbered mountain side, bushwhacking of the most desperate order, and in the gray gloom of approaching night reached the bottom safely, crossed a swift stream which proved to be what it simply had to be, according to Sid's deductions, Douglass Creek instead of the Simpson River, and outspanned in a narrow grassy meadow, and in a formidable thunderstorm as well. It rained as it only can rain in the Rockies, and then varied the perform-

ance by turning to sleet while we made a rapid camp and ate our beans and bacon in one of the tents and then drowned all our sorrows in hot tea.

"I don't see any fun in that," says the tenderfoot.

Try it! All real weather is in the heart, and some of the most terrible days on the trail shine brightest in the light from within. In that pelting storm we built a huge camp fire in the open meadow, dragging great trunks to feed it, as though all outdoors were to be warmed and we gathered around it on the soaked ground and talked and laughed and sang in sheer joy of living; and we made cocoa and sang again until somebody looked at a watch, and lo! it was midnight and the storm unabated.

Morning broke gray and cold, with ice on the water pails and not a cayuse in sight or hearing. An hour of trailing in wet brush located them, however, and we were off up Douglass Creek, knowing that it must head somewhere in the Continental Divide. Soon we were looking down on more of that beautiful park land from a tall ridge sloping toward it and with extensive larch forests on the crest. Such a slope, smoothly grassed, must be traversed very carefully by man or horse and at a very gradual angle of descent—"side-hill gouging" is the expressive vernacular. Out again into the wide beautiful park among the scurrying gophers: more conning of the inadequate maps, and much scratching of heads anent that elusive trail. Sid picked it up at last in a sticky muskeg sloping up to two barren rocky peaks that marked the gateway to the Simpson River. It was a masterly bit of path-finding. Apropos of side-hill gouging, the guides and horse wranglers hereabouts are fond of filling the

ears of tenderfeet with tales of a wonderful creature, the side-hill gouger, which for ages has traversed the mountains in only one direction, until, in the course of evolution, the legs on one side of him have become much shorter than the opposite pair. Now the side-hill gouger's flesh is most delicious; and to get him all that is necessary is to head him off. He turns; his short pair of legs find themselves on the down hill; he falls helplessly and is an easy prey. Crude enough, of course. But I have actually seen the impossible tale believed, gulped whole, by those who should have known better.

The view that greeted us at this new pass summit was the abomination of desolation, a wild confusion of barren rounded rocks, reminding one of Arizona's worst. Even the colors of the desert shone about us, for there were beautiful outcrops of pink and pearl-gray marbles. Scant lakes filled in the carvings of the ice age; but they were chill and stern and dead—most unlakely, to coin a word—for a lake in a landscape should always suggest tenderness and beauty. But there was some life even in this barren waste, for a great bull moose crashed away at our approach, scattering the small stones this way and that with his huge hoofs. Then appeared the frightful descent to the Simpson River, a dead land once forested and blooming, and the trail steeper even than Cabin Creek. Fire had done its awful work with finality and completeness, and gaunt trunks, bare and straight, towered pale and naked, the white skeletons of the noble wood. The mountain side in the burned area glowed crimson with epilobium, always the follower of fire. Three thousand feet of terrifying steepness yawned before us.

We dismounted for the horses' sakes—and for our own, lest we inadvertently precede them to the bottom. The desert barrenness of the pass summit gave place to grass slopes dotted with a few firs that had grown too scattered for the fire to reach; and at the edge of the fire zone we were walking, or rather sliding, in a perfect garden of luscious wild strawberries. A few hundred feet further down the strawberries thinned out and disappeared and a delightful pungent fragrance filled the air. It was the odor of rich ripe huckleberries, not the blue ones of our eastern hills and, indeed, of other regions of the Rockies and the Selkirks, but dark cherry red and savory beyond description. We swept them by handfuls from the low bushes as we walked. The mountains play merry tricks on the seasons: we had passed from May into August in half an hour's climb. In all this undergrowth, however, was not one tiny tree, not one twig of reforestation, nor any drop of water. The great slope was on its swift way to denudation and bare bed rock. And yet there are idiots in high position who claim that forest fires do the land little or no permanent harm.

The bottom at last, on a little burned-over flat lying in a bend of the clear cold Simpson, from which we actually dipped up small trout in the water buckets. A long march to the goal itself was the day's program, so, contrary to custom, a halt for lunch was ordered beside a large winter tipi strongly built of many poles and thatched with heavy sods. Unpacking the cayuses and turning them loose for an hour's grazing, we brewed the blessing of the weary and lunched to the great delight and personal profit of dozens of gophers,

tame in their ignorance of man. Crumbs of bread and prune stones were filched in triumph from the very table, and an empty fruit can tossed to them provoked many a fierce riot as half a dozen of them tried to poke their heads into it at once to lap the few remaining drops of sweet juice.

The march along the Simpson flat was burned timber in earnest. The trees had of course been much larger than those high up on the slopes, and the huge trunks lay in confused heaps as they had fallen, while others swayed above our heads in tottery instability. Hurdling here became a vocation rather than an art. Most cayuses will carefully step over any obstruction across which they can lift a leg; but one must ever be prepared for the leap. The destruction of this noble forest filled us with real sadness. To one who loves the woods it was like a home bereaved by death. Here and there a lonely jack-pine made a sorry show of reforestation; but the outcrops of jagged rock more and more frequent with the gradual rise of the shelf, proved the swift progress of the denudation and offered one more obstacle to travel. The great lift had begun from the Simpson Flats to the famous—or rather infamous—Landslide Pass, sometimes called, most appropriately, Gnome Valley. It was the most likely abiding place imaginable for all the Gnomes and Trolls of ugly legend.

Of all the scenes of desolate wildness on the planet, Landslide Pass should rank among the notables: six miles of the ruin of a world. Some time in the shadowy geologic past a fierce convulsion rent a mountain range asunder, and rent it lengthwise. One half of a lofty chain has fallen in ruin, rock piled upon rock, rocks

from the size of a cathedral to that of a football. The other half of the range still stands, black, bare, forbidding, its vertical cliffs towering to the jagged crest ten thousand feet in air, showing the immensity of the cataclysm. The very gods must have stood aghast at the crash. Between and over these heaped-up boulders the cayuses picked their weary, stumbling way. To add to the general misery of this terrible trail, it was waterless as the Sahara. The silence of fatigue fell upon the party. Gloomy clouds gathered overhead and the all-pervading smoke of the forest fires settled densely around. Assiniboine has a bad reputation as a manufacturing center for storms and other breeds of villainous weather, and the giant seemed to be getting ready to do himself proud in the way of sustaining this reputation. Parties have been known to spend two weeks at the base of the great mountain without even glimpsing it; and so we shared the surrounding gloom. The diabolical pass, a monotony of destruction, was getting decidedly on our nerves, even the cayuses biting and kicking one another in fits of ill-humor. But a grim resolve possessed us. Come to see Assiniboine and fail? Never! We would stay until we saw it, if we starved. Happily this last contingency was so remote that we felt very brave about it.

Suddenly in the gray dusk of evening the pass opened into a meadow with deep grasses and a pretty lake, whose shores were of fine fragments of black slate. And there, towering over us, the landmark of a world, rose Assiniboine. Fifteen hundred feet taller than his nearest snow-capped brother, the great peak loomed through the twilight, magnificent, mysterious.

A cry of wondering admiration broke from all at the great sight of the noble mountain hanging above us in the mist like imminent and impending fate. The beauty of a great mountain is a serious, compelling beauty; it is like beauty of character compared to mere beauty of feature: it is not admirable merely; it is worshipful. For a few moments we rejoiced in the great spectacle, and then, as though a monarch brusquely closed a brief audience, Assiniboine blotted himself out behind a dense curtain of cloud.

Out from this cloud curtain came now a sharp rain which rapidly developed into a mountain thunderstorm in all its grandeur. Vivid flashes of lightning seared the heavens and struck fearfully into the blue ice of the glaciers high up on the surrounding peaks. The thunder crashed and roared, reverberating in multiplied echoes among the crags; and above all the din rose the artillery-like explosions of the constantly falling avalanches. The wind howled down from the peaks in wild blasts, and all the tasks of setting up housekeeping in the wild had to be performed unslighted. Pitching camp and getting supper in a raging storm hardly sound like cheerful tasks, but the "real thing" in campers can be cheerful under all circumstances. We made a Lucullan feast on the "swarm of B's," while the rain fairly diluted our tea. There was no possible danger of a camp fire spreading on such a night, so a mighty one soon cast its red glare on the clouds, and close by it in a little bower of drooping spruces roofed with a pack-mantle we toasted ourselves literally and figuratively in high content.

If there is anything in this big round world finer than a camp fire, I have never found it and I cannot

imagine it. The camp fire means warmth, comfort, cheer, brightness, rest. In its genial glow magic spells are cast, and the best that is in the soul of man rises like rich cream and pours over in rare conversing, in song or in story. Or the benign influence of the flames may take a yet more mystic turn, and the group sit the evening through in silence, conscious of a pervading Presence of Friendship, each responsive to the telepathy of the hour. And the tongues of fire leap up in a weird fury like the winnowing of spirit wings, and quivering waves of incandescence dance wild dances among the glowing embers, and one by one the logs burn through and fall into the fiery vortex and a meteoric whirl of sparks goes eddying aloft, while the black pall of night and storm presses close in upon the illuminated circle and from that outer darkness unseen eyes may be watching hungrily. A camp fire is typical of life: the vivid blaze of the present; the sparks and embers that memory evokes out of the past to glow warmly in the heart; and at last, ashes to ashes, while just beyond yawns the unknown, the everlasting dark, the void and chaos of the Eternal Future.

Praying for clear weather, we crept away to the warm down of the sleeping bags; and pelting sleet on a tight stretched tent roof makes an ideal lullaby. The psychology of the love of the wilderness and of the worship of the Red Gods is a strange thing. It may be a reversion to type, an inheritance from our cave ancestors; but I strongly suspect that much of it is due to sheer self-pride, the exulting satisfaction that the puny human feels in defying the forces of Nature; and none can deny the absolute happiness of the defiance and of the triumph.

We awoke to see Indian Rosemary cooking oatmeal, euphoniously and significantly styled in the mountains "hot filler," over a fire which she had crept early forth to build for herself in defiance of the rain; for the damsel possesses the true camp spirit and is happiest when contributing to the common weal. Camp spirit, by the by, like a poet, is born and not made. Life in Nature's mother-lap lays bare the naked soul of man—and, as an afterthought, of woman especially—so that if the least trace of a "yellow streak" exists in the character it will show. Be assured of it.

Fire building, by the by, is an art which every man or woman who goes into the wilderness must learn; and no one dare be separated for one moment from a well-filled waterproof match box, a heavy knife and a belt axe. A few steps astray may lead anyone into situations where a match and the knowledge of how to use it may draw the sharp, stern line betwixt life and death. Even in heavy and long-continued rains dry wood is always to be had in the forest, if you know where to get it. As the spruces grow, the lowest branches die and curl downward and inward; and the tiny dead twigs of these, perfectly protected by the heavy drooping boughs above, are the woodsman's tinder. And wet though the outside of a dead log may be, there is dry wood within for shavings and there are axes wherewith to hew in to find it. Rosemary knows the life and arts of the woods and delights therein. It was good to see her at the primitive task and reveling in it, tossing back wet wisps of hair from cheeks aglow with the fire and with the pelting of the sleet.

"I wish," she cried, as we gathered hungrily around, "that I could take ten thousand girls in New York and set them down here to scratch for themselves."

"They could get gophers if they scratched fast enough," came Sid's comment.

When we looked that morning for our giant, he was not. We had as well camped upon a level prairie; not a mountain even suggested itself to the vision. The clouds were not above us; they were on us, around us, enfolding us in their clammy clasp. It was piercingly cold, and as we finished a hopeful breakfast the blizzard burst again in a fierce whirlwind of snow. The mountains were hid, as it seemed, forever. But there was no cowering in tents on a glorious August day like this. The beautiful forest was to be explored which bordered the Alpine Park on the edge of which we were camped, and the open parkland itself, with its half buried flowers, was well worth while. The fluffy snow tufting the low bending boughs sifted down the back of our necks. The great spruces and bending balsams looked like Christmas trees. Had we, like Rip, slept till Christmas? The calendar was a mockery. It was interesting in the treeless park to note the relation, whether it may be actual or coincidental, between flower colors and snow. I have elsewhere alluded to this, and here it was seen to perfection: white flowers soon buried; yellow ones partly successful in shaking off their chill shroud; while the red blooms stood boldly forth with not a flake adhering.

Others, too, than we were astir. Broods of mergansers sported on the lake with much diving and flapping of half-plumaged wings. Ridiculously appro-

priate it is that these half-fledged ducklings with full-fledged airs should have passed on their technical name of "flappers" to other half-fledged ducklings of self-realized importance. Huge hawks soared low above the meadows, boding ill to adventurous small fry of the burrow; and there came the rare fortune to surprise and photograph Ephraim himself digging out a gopher for breakfast. The great grizzly slunk away into the brush after a startled glance.

The livelong day the white whirl lasted; yes, and all the night. And when the night fell, six pairs of feet were drying in a row as close to the crackling blaze as their owners could exist. No shoe on Earth is waterproof against snow, but a wetting is harmless in the Big North. The air is so sparkingly pure that a pneumonia microbe would die of loneliness in it. So we dried out in blissful ease, but at least one pair of socks showed so much the worse for wear that Rosemary was moved to curiosity. Domestic economy—in theory—always attracts her.

"When you're out on the trapping lines, Sid," she queried, "do you darn your own socks?"

"Never," was the laconic reply.

"Don't you have to carry a lot of them, then?" The quiz was on.

"No; only two or three pairs."

"Why, how do you manage?" she cross-questioned.

"We jump 'em."

"Jump them?" in mystified accents.

"Yes, sure. You don't mean to say you've never heard of jumping socks?"

"Never in the world."

"Well, you see," explained Sid, "socks always wear

first at the heel. So when the heel is gone we reverse them, so as to bring the hole at the front of the ankle. Then we have a good heel again; and when that's gone we turn 'em sidewise. Now as each sock has a back and a front and two sides, we really have four pairs of socks out of each pair; for our heels are all that we need to keep from rubbing."

There was a howl. But it is even so; and one more secret of the wilderness was laid bare. Resourcefulness is well established as a characteristic of life in the silences.

Sid's cheery call, "Hot water, ladies," roused us to a white world. It was still snowing violently. Our own little tent had been open toward the storm and Nip and I were buried a foot deep to the waist. Xenophon of old records that "Snow is a warm cover upon whomsoever it does not melt." This hadn't melted, and the old Greek spoke true. We had never passed a warmer, snugger night. Assiniboine was making good as a purveyor of storms, but the resolve to stay on was undaunted. We took stock of the food and did a bit of calculating with fairly satisfactory results. As the day wore on the flakes fell fewer and fewer, lighter and lighter. Then a pale yellow grease spot appeared in the heavens where should have been the sun. Soon a welcome gale sprang up, breaking the leaden gray cloud-blanket into a patch-work quilt. Now long pencils of sunlight flickered in golden tracery over the mountains, dim and ghostly in the mist, as if the gods were at play flashing a gigantic mirror. The low-lying mists slowly thinned, broke and floated away in wisps of tenuous smoky vapor. The crests of the lesser peaks appeared, and the huge

flanks of the monster we had come to see showed higher and higher, though the summit was still in persistent cloud. Suddenly the canopy of the clouds rolled away, the sun blazed in an intense azure sky, and the vast pinnacle stood forth peerless, glittering, sparkling with a trillion diamonds as the clear rays beat upon the fresh snow. Where the towering pyramid rose too steep for snow to cling, the wonderful colors of the strata—reds, rich browns, yellows, deep orange—glowed fresh in horizontal bands of polished beauty. The King was King, not in stature merely, but in the gorgeous broidery of his royal robes as well. And there too was the regal ermine of the snow. The rock of the lesser peaks showed only a plain dull brownish gray. We were fairly swept off our feet by the unique beauty of the scene. Each called the others to a new vantage point from which to view fresh glories of the mountain. The Spirit of the Mountains descended upon us and possessed us. This Spirit is a very real power. It grips; and it never looses its tenacious hold. It is a strange thing how great mountains gain over the human mind and will an influence that never can be shaken off. They impress their own wild freedom on the heart. They breed in their devotees an ecstasy, an exhilaration, a lust for the perilous step. They stand a perpetual challenge to men. The snow-turbaned giant vaunts himself in his majesty. "Come and conquer me," he is ever calling; and the gage is ever accepted. Pride of achievement drives the climber to rock and to ice, to hanging by the fingers over bottomless abysses, to groping for a precarious toe-rest on smooth vertical walls where an inch-wide ledge is a pledge of safety,

to cutting steps in glassy ice, to wild glissades, to leaps where the landing is a test for the equilibrist. The mountains are terrible enemies in the wrath of their crags and glaciers and avalanches—but, "Love your enemies," we are enjoined, and the mountain love never dies in the heart. And so we exulted in glory revealed. Cameras worked overtime. Like the traditional "little busy bee," we improved the shining hour with eager enthusiasm. Shining hours are all too rare here, as around any notably great peak, and we dreaded a return of the all-concealing clouds.

I know no other mountain of the Canadian Rockies, not even the massive Robson, that gives the impression of overpowering grandeur and symmetry given by Assiniboine. The lofty quadrangular pyramid rising from its comparatively contracted base emphasizes its height by its small cross sections at various levels, and appears loftier than the huge mass of Robson which overtops it nearly two thousand feet. Both are gorgeous peaks, and it may be that my lingering preference for Assiniboine is due to the fact that I saw it first and to the permanence of first impressions. Assiniboine has individuality, character, graceful proportions all its own. It is the typical high peak. When you *imagine* a mountain, it is always one like Assiniboine. The very stage of nature seems set to display it; and indeed the architecture of the surroundings, if I may employ the term, suggests a mighty theater. Just under twelve thousand feet in altitude, the culminating pinnacle of the divide, the spire of a continent, Assiniboine as seen from the north rises boldly as a narrow square pyramid of amazing steepness and tapering to the sharpest possible apex. It is the central and

loftiest peak in a short arc-shaped group skirting the southern shore of a charming lake. Higher than the other peaks of the group by some fifteen hundred feet, it completely dominates the landscape. In form the peak is almost a replica of the Matterhorn, and it is even more difficult of ascent; in fact, it appears to the amateur climber absolutely inaccessible.

The first ascent of Assiniboine was made by that intrepid mountaineer, Outram, after the failure of other skilled Alpinists had given the peak the reputation of invincibility. His experience was a thrilling one. Overtaken by storm in an attempt made by the southwestern ridge, he gained the summit of a peak which his guide insisted was the main mountain. Testing it by shouting into the cloud veil to all points of the compass, from one direction came back an echo. There was therefore in that direction some higher peak close to him. Realizing that he had missed his objective in the impenetrable fog, he descended with infinite caution, succeeded in safely recrossing the *col* to his camp in the park-land, and the next day in clear weather he triumphed by the same route, descending by the northern face which has since that time been the route of ascent.

The Assiniboine group fronts north and east, facing a broad Alpine meadow which slopes toward the lake at the base of the stately arc of mountains like the seats of some vast amphitheater. This sloping park-land is crossed by numerous low ridges, some showing a scant growth of larch and spruce, others an outcrop of bare rock. The meadows are luxuriantly grassed, keep for a thousand horses; and in it are pretty little lakes no larger than ponds, in whose still, mirror-like

surfaces the surrounding peaks and chains are gloriously reflected. Around the beautiful open park ranges of tremendous mountains swing in mighty circuit, and to-day they were all of purest white under their royal ermine cloak of new snow, a vision of the Delectable Mountains brought down to Earth.

All nature, like ourselves, was reveling in the sunshine. Gophers and chipmunks frisked in the snow in keen delight that it wasn't real winter yet anyhow. Porcupines, those pests of a camp, ambled in leisurely fashion out of our way, knowing full well their invulnerability and the needlessness of haste. The impertinence of a porcupine—properly porcupine, "the spiny hog"—is unbounded; it is hard to say whether it arises from stupidity or devilishness. Only the night before, Corkie had awakened to find one backing out of her tent with her shoe. Corkie is always gentle, especially so with burglars, and she tactfully persuaded him to drop the pelf. On the lower slopes of the monarch himself pretty ptarmigans side-stepped the stones we threw at them; and the daintiest of sparrows flitted around us like friends—to say nothing of the ubiquitous whisky-jack, he of the pale head and thievish heart, a Raffles with frosted silver poll.

We climbed about regardless of the great balls of snow that formed on our hob-nailed soles, a thing which is the bane of the climber, next to a skim of snow over ice, and renders serious climbing in fresh wet snow impossible. So we made no attempt on the giant, for such an attack is to be risked only when every circumstance favors. But we did climb a low rounded peak to the right of the group and facing it, a peak that would make the eyes of a paleontologist

bulge from his head; for its summit consisted of great blocks of pale gray limestone showing hundreds of enormous spiral fossils of the triton, full nine inches in diameter. But it was the beauty of to-day that held us, not the reminders of a time when the height we stood on was the bottom of some prehistoric sea, and we had an enchanted view outspread before us. Close in our front rose Pica, the western buttress of the Assiniboine arc, its huge heaps of talus, snow-covered, bathing their feet in another deep blue lake at a much higher level than Lake Assiniboine. Curving grandly to the left swept the whole group glittering in the sun, the white of the new-fallen snow, the blue ice of the glaciers and the warm tints of the rocks making a delightful color-scheme centering in the painted strata of Assiniboine. On toward the left, far across the white expanse of the park, this bright winter day in August, the depressions of the passes to the Cross and the Spray Rivers were grooved against the sky line, separated by fine snow covered peaks. Northward and westward stretched continuously the beautiful park, deep in its spotless snow mantle and thinly studded in places with dark green spruces; while away on the horizon rose the formidable serrated ranges walling in the gloom of Landslide Pass, unblemished in their snowy purity. Sweep with the eye around the jagged circle where sky and land meet. There rose the white-sheeted ranges unnamed and unexplored, a tumble of mighty peaks in the far distance toward the Kootenai country, three or four separate and distinct thunderstorms playing over them in the immense reach of the vision. And there below us lay the exquisite

Lake Aline with the Islands of the Blest dotting its blue surface and prisoned forever in walls of everlasting rock. Everywhere around Assiniboine are the most delightfully picturesque lakes, most of them, curiously enough, without visible outlet and evidently discharging through fissures in the continental frame. We feasted the senses to content of heart.

This day of charm declined through a whole palette of sunset colors and a wondrous Alpenglow—"the unearthly glory," as Theodore Roosevelt called it—to a flawless night. As a climax of beauty the full moon rose from behind the glorious peak and bathed the snow in floods of silver light. The distant ranges, white as enormous snow drifts, gleamed pale in silver sheen, ghostly and unreal. We dwelt in a world of frosted silver, and pale floods of a divine light were poured about us with all their entrancing mystery. Long we lingered that perfect night around the camp fire, often rising to walk out in the cold moonlight for one more look at a scene whose loveliness was not of Earth.

At the turn of midnight Robinson Crusoe reverently bared his head and murmured, "A great day is gone."

The night waned in bitter cold. The smaller lakes froze from shore to shore. We rose early to greet the first tints of morning on the great peak. The soft glow of the pink pearl shone from the high snows. Then the deeper blush of the rose of Cypris. And suddenly an ocean of golden light ushered in the day.

Assiniboine had been gracious to us, and kind.

In our conferences concerning our return we had decided to attempt the route through the country of

the Spray. It would be new to us. It was beautiful. Besides we had had quite enough of the stony misery of Gnome Valley and were loath to tackle in reverse that tremendous wall rising from the Simpson River to the Continental Divide. It was a real heartache to turn from the dazzling beauty of the morning landscape and focus our attention on camp-breaking and packing. We felt as though leaving a beloved home. But here was where æsthetics must bow to practicalities—I hate that word—and the pack train was soon creeping toward the pass to the Spray. We turned for a last look at Assiniboine's snow-crowned majesty and beheld a long cloud-banner floating out from the very summit. The monarch was flaunting his defiance at the invaders. His gracious moods are of brief duration, and cloud-banners are his threats of evil to come. In an hour it was sleeting fiercely.

We traversed the park at the edge of the heavy timber, hoping to pick up some vestige of a trail. This park is a paradise for big game of all kinds, and the soft turf bore the tracks of caribou, moose, deer, bear and lynx. Finally a faint trail was picked up. A last look about us, and with keen regret we stepped over the eaves of the continent's roof and began to climb down its walls by ladder; for the short obliques of that terribly steep trail strongly suggested the rungs of a huge ladder, down which we climbed afoot under the overhanging fronds of the spruces both for comfort and for safety. Carefully the sure-footed cayuses worked their way down, often planting their fore feet stiffly ahead, then deliberately sitting down and sliding until all four hoofs came together, re-

peating the process time after time until a less steep gradient or firmer foothold allowed freer stepping.

The timber grew heavier and denser, and the feet of the cayuses sank deep into the virgin mold. The cloud banner had fulfilled its promise, and mingled rain and sleet were now adding a new soaking to a soil already at the saturation point. Every little half-level pocket on the mountain side was a muskeg in miniature, over which your cayuse might pick his way with you in safety with much squash and splash; or he might pitch in to the shoulder and then would ensue a struggle against the black pasty bog and much intense verbiage to persuade the cayuse to do his best to extricate himself. To pass safely over muskeg one should break moose or caribou to saddle: their great splay hoofs, like snowshoes, leave hardly a track as they skim the unsubstantial surface. One realizes here to the full the benefits of heavy forestation and the vital necessity for the careful conservation of our few remaining great forest areas. As a rule there is no muskeg in fire-desolated country, and but little in cleared land. Only living roots hold the precipitation, and soil denudation follows close upon destruction of trees.

We slid and scrambled down that endless mountain side, rudely disturbing the denizens of the wild. Here a deer bounded away over the fallen logs, flashing the white signal flag of fear; there a cinnamon bear, Ephraim's first cousin, shuffled ahead a few steps on the trail and then vanished in the underbrush. The great cliffs encroached close upon the trail, delicate, veil-like cascades falling from the living snows that capped them and breaking to a misty spray ere they

reached the bottom of their leap. Across the valley rose the ranges that give birth to the clear flowing Bryant River. At last we were down the trail and out upon the flats along the Bryant, marching through dense thickets of willow and alder matted like a well-trimmed hedge. If one fell behind a bit, the train in front gave the curious effect of great white packs and human torsos slipping along over level greenery by some unseen power.

The mountains walling in this little valley were a geological curiosity. The ranges on the left were of limestone and their once-timbered slopes were terribly fire-scarred and one vast crimson sheet of epilobium, looking almost as if the blaze still licked at the fallen trunks and the few gaunt skeletons still standing. The cliffs to the right of the defile were of slate and fell almost sheer in smooth polished slabs forming the dreaded "window-pane country," the terror of all climbers. Ahead the valley opened into a grassy plain where the cayuses were seized with an insane and untimely desire to graze. They strayed from line in every direction, testing to the utmost our fair pack-driver's skill and resourcefulness. Her sternest tones fell upon deaf ears. The cayuses literally did not understand her; for all she said could be printed with perfect propriety and cayuses comprehend only the unprintable.

The rain had ceased temporarily: we had descended through it, though it still pelted the high pass we had left. Far in the distance ahead a violent thunderstorm was discharging eddying blizzards of snow on the Spray Range just looming into view with the splendid peak of Mount Kidd, whose summit was lost in the

feathery whirl. A sudden turn now outflanked the Assiniboine group and brought us our first disappointment of the expedition. The rear of Assiniboine is, or then was, practically a *terra incognita*, unsurveyed and unmapped. Time was lacking for us to penetrate this mysterious nest of giants, and from this point only could we hope to view the forbidden land through a great gaping gorge that yawned away toward the south. But the Storm King reigned in his might; and though we saw two glorious double-tongued glaciers sweeping down in cascades of white and azure from huge peaks whose uplift above the cruel clouds we could only guess, and though we were favored with one fleeting glimpse of the rear slopes of Assiniboine himself, there was no available pasturage to justify a camp even for one day in hope of clearing skies. But enough was visible to prove that these unpictured ranges are on a vast scale and worthy buttresses for the crowning peak. We passed on with regret and entered a long stretch of burned timber. Twenty miles of fire-blasted desolation lay ahead. The imagination recoiled from picturing the appalling horror of that holocaust, when the sheets of flame swept down the lovely valleys of the Bryant and the Spray, consuming literally the very soil. The ruined trees lay crossed and piled at every conceivable angle, forming a gigantic lattice work of fallen trunks often many feet above the ground. Obstructions like five-barred gates were everywhere before us. It was like riding to hounds—minus the hounds, the red coats and the anise drag. Nip declared after a particularly lively leap, that she now felt fully qualified for a three-ring act. Among these masses of fallen timber brave, mast-

like skeletons still stood in unstable equilibrium, bare of bark and white with age, except for the black scars and charrings of the flames. To add to the pleasures of the occasion, many of these seared hollow trees harbored colonies of bees and hornets; and, this being a rainy day, they were all at home. Moreover, they resented intrusion. A kicking and plunging of the forward horses was a signal to the rear-guard to take a long detour. Frequently this was impossible by reason of the tangle. Often those in front merely stirred up the trouble, and every angry, buzzing, sharp-tailed sinner was lying in wait for the unfortunate end man. I vividly recall one hallowed moment when both hands were fully employed in subduing a bucking, bee-stung cayuse while a particularly lusty hornet was prodding the tip of my nose persistently and with malicious concentration of purpose. Happily the stings of these northern hymenoptera, though painful, are by no means so terribly severe as the wounds inflicted by their more southerly cousins.

Next came a tract where the reforestation had mercifully begun, but with jack-pine only, a living tinder for some future flame. These tufted pines grew in a dense thicket and reached to our shoulders as we rode. The rain was again falling in torrents, and the switch of the dripping boughs left no dry thread upon us. The horses were continually hurdling, the pack continually straying in a vain search for a short cut. Invariably they landed in a *cul-de-sac*. We sang as an antidote to the prevailing misery, but it sounded like the hollow bluff it was. Finally Robinson Crusoe was moved to curse the land, and sought a scapegoat for his woe.

"Ben," said he, "you say you know this man Bryant after whom this hellish valley is named?"

I confessed him as a valued friend.

"Then cut the biggest club you can handle, and when you see him hit him with it."

It was the only thoroughly venomous remark I ever heard Robinson make.

Creeping wearily over a little rocky ridge, we came on a bit of a plateau overlooking a grassy flat bordering the rushing Spray, which, now swollen by the Bryant, cuts the ridge in the exquisitely beautiful Spray Falls. While we were unsaddling, the clouds broke away and the declining sun beamed forth and warmed and cheered our dejected, saturated band and divinely gilded the snow peaks beyond the river. No one can realize what a personal friend the sun is until he has hidden his glowing face for a few days. Who can blame the sun-worshippers of old?

Nip, true to her instincts, was soon casting her flies into the spume below the falls. Soon we heard her yell, and knew that something had happened, for Nip announces the strike of a trout very much as a hen advertises the arrival of an egg. Soon she came toiling up the steep little bluff lugging three four-pounders, great salmon trout with flesh like a blood-orange, breakfast for Kings. Here another equine conspiracy was hatched by the thrice-accursed Silver, who essayed to cross the Spray in a break for liberty and a strike against burden bearing. But the wild current of foaming green water literally washed him back again, to be ignominiously haltered and picketed, denied even the questionable privilege of the hobble. While we were all in pursuit of the errant beast great terror

was struck into the hearts of a brood of seven ashy coots, who gave an astonishing exhibition of the power that lies in their queer semi-palmate toes by swimming rapidly up the torrent that had just proved too much for a powerful horse to cross. We moved out of camp next morning in brilliant sunshine and soon emerged from the terrible down timber into a region of low foothills so completely swept by the fiery destruction that even the tree trunks were consumed. We marched now over bare soil rapidly denuding to a pebble stratum beneath. Oh, the entrancing prospect from those barren hills! Below us lay the two beautiful Spray Lakes, the bordering mountains of the farther banks showing inverted in the clear water as in a gigantic mirror. And on the far horizon to the southwest towered in wild confusion, piled peak on peak, crag on crag, glacier on glacier, the stupendous Kananaskis Range, the sun glittering on its eternal snows and the broken clouds of the departing storm weaving strange heaped-up patterns in the sky above.

The expedition's last camp—always these last camps cast a shade of sorrow over a congenial and happy party—was early pitched that day by the charming lake that mirrored all the grandeur about it. The Spray Lakes, within fairly easy march from Banff, are often visited and we felt almost civilized as we cast the fly for the leaping salmon trout for which the lakes are famed. I know no spot more adorable in its gentle loveliness than this delightful lake by which our tents were spread. The very creatures of the wild had lost their fear. Fat gophers and great striped ground squirrels with chocolate colored head and shoulders ate crusts of bannock from our hands and

submitted to be softly stroked. Sparrows of a species unknown to us hopped about on the table cloth—of course a metamorphosed pack mantle—picking crumbs. Broods of wild ducks swam up unafraid to the pebbly beach before the tents. As the evening fell in untarnished beauty over the mirror of the lake the loons mocked us in eerie laughter and a solitary coyote across the lake confided his loneliness to the afterglow in a shrill treble of re-echoing staccato woe. The fire kindled that last night of a season's communing with the Red Gods was a fit one to burn in their honor. Huge stumps were rolled together; dead logs heaped high; for there was no possibility of further fire-damage to this denuded slope. The flames, eddying to Heaven in forked tongues, roared our farewell to the wild, and we grouped around the pyre like Parsee worshipers, while beyond the ring of kindly warmth outpoured by the blaze the frost bit sharply through the keen night air. The glow of the fire was still red on the treeless hill behind us when we reluctantly broke away from the charm and crept into our warm sleeping bags.

The march down the lower Spray to Banff is through an ever narrowing valley walled by parallel ranges of mountains of gray rock, not exceedingly high, showing no glaciers and but little snow. Both ranges terminate at Banff as if abashed in the presence of their mightier brethren. All of them are of the "writing desk" type; one side offering an easy slope to the summit, the other side almost vertical cliffs. Down the river we plodded with lightened packs, past the confluence of the Spray and Bow and the splendid break in the mountains through which the

united rivers rush in the first stage of their journey across the continent. This gap affords a gorgeous view of distant Peechee; and as the train climbed the high hill by the tumbling Falls of the Bow, Mount Aylmer reared his snowy head, and Cascade Mountain, and all the Big Brothers of the Great Divide. By Sid's cottage under the very shadows of Cascade we dismounted for the last time that year from the cayuses we had learned to love, with all their idiosyncrasies, and to trust *when we were astride of them*; for that is the only time one can put perfect trust in a cayuse.

CHAPTER VII

OVER THE HILLS TO THE COLUMBIA HEADWATERS

Off in the rain. A wet camp. Bill Noble. Camp by the Kicking Horse. Open forest. The valley of the Kootenai. Dainard. Down timber. The prospector. Briscoe Pass. Terrible descent. Sinclair Hot Springs. Sinclair Pass. Trout in the summit lake. Evolution of a trail. Camp in the darkness. The box canyon. No-go and Loco. Defeated by storm.

It was a day of gray and white. The sky was a leaden sheet. Low-lying clouds scudded close above our heads and blotted out the grandeur of the peaks. Fierce williwaws swept down with icy gusts of rain and sleet from every gorge and glacier. The cayuses drooped to the pelt of the storm, dejection incarnate. Within the little store a supply of food was collecting for some weeks in the wilds; and Sid, the chef—in the vernacular, grub rustler—Robinson Crusoe and Nip—the housewife of the woods, some one dubbed her—laid their heads together over the problems of the inner man. And so the goodly heap grew and grew and finally was pronounced complete down to the last luxury of the trail. The rest of the party killed time by warding off the attacks of a horde of tourists “doing” the Canadian Rockies in personally conducted fashion, who gathered in hungry curiosity and asked myriads of questions and took volumes of notes, while only the dull gray skies saved us from whole batteries of camera artillery. The American tourist—!!!!

At last the packing was complete, every rider had tested his cinches and called "Yes" to the final query of the start, daily repeated, "Everybody wound up?" and away we rode in the gusty downpour as happy as only those can be who love the wilderness. There are no bad days in the wilderness. Some are better than others, it is true; but none are irredeemably bad. There need be no clouds upon the face of the inner sun. It was, however, a keen regret that the magnificent mountains surrounding us were impenetrably veiled. Behind us we knew towered the splendidly glaciated Emerald group and the rounded summit of Stephen. Ahead loomed the symmetric pyramid of King, while the vast bulk of the Chancellor rose near at hand; and yet never a break in the veil whose ragged hem whipped to and fro in the blast and frayed its edges against our faces. It was a marvelous study in cloud drapery; but we preferred the atmospheric nude, for we had long looked forward to the gorgeous scenes now hidden. Hour after hour the pack train plodded the sodden trail, until the roaring of the swollen Ottertail called us to our first camp in a narrow little valley growing waist-deep in rich grasses, a perfect heaven for a tired and hungry cayuse. But it was the monosyllabic antithesis of heaven for tired and hungry humans. The torrential rain had made of the entire 'pocket' a dripping sponge. An ancient construction camp of early C. P. R. days had stood there, and its dilapidated log cabins with the dirt of decades and a choice assortment of aged 'porcupiny' smells made the wide, wide world beckon alluringly.

If there is one thing that Nip cannot endure it is a smell; so beneath a rickety lean-to shed of warped

and twisted boards, we rigged, upon a soft and rain-soaked strewing of dead grasses, a luxurious bed with the aid of two waterproof ground cloths and a pack mantle. And there we lulled ourselves to sleep by the howl of the storm, snug and dry except for an occasional drop impartially distributed in either one of two upturned ears. Of course the dainty little wood mice would snuggle up in one's neck for warmth; but one couldn't really blame them, and Nip said it seemed cruel to fling them by the tail into the storm when she was so comfy.

Bright and early the next morning we were up and stirring. There is no inducement to prolong slumber when lying upon a saturated sponge, where at every uneasy turn the water squashes underneath your ground cloth and most of your bed's softness is due to mud. The rain had ceased and the weather was trying hard, though ineffectually, to clear. Savory odors were wafted "to usward" on the breeze; and a short, stocky, stubble-bearded frying-pan artist was busy with the "hot filler," *i.e.*, oatmeal—and bacon.

Meet Bill Noble, my readers: it was too wet last night to introduce him. To know Bill was to bid dull care begone. He was a Cockney of purest blood and breed; and between his sins of omission and commission in the maltreatment of the letter *h*, that aspirate came out about fifty-fifty as regards its linguistic rights. Bill had faithfully served the Widow of Windsor and her son under nearly every sky, and had picked up certain oddities in each clime. The resultant was a composite of Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd. Bill's tales of his adventures formed an epic. He was ever on the verge of trouble, and never tumbled in.

His wit was of the disarming variety: one could not long be angry with Bill Noble. I well recall one tragic day toward the close of an expedition in which Bill's reckless cookery had overtaxed the food supply, and hunger stared us in the face. The last handful of rice was bubbling in the kettle, with Bill spinning yarns beside it to an all too interested group. Bill's mind focussed on his tale and on his audience. Suddenly the pungent smell of burned rice filled the air. It was blackened and charred beyond use. Sid's most potent rebuke was ever a silent, concentrated, piercing glare, more eloquent than curses, and those steely eyes were slowly boring holes through Bill. The party stood by in expectant curiosity as to the outcome, for rebuke sat disturbingly upon the high-tempered ex-soldier. Bill drew an enormous hunting knife, handed it ceremoniously, hilt first, to Sid, and in mock humility said: "Tyke me back of a tree, so's the leddies cawn't see it, an' cut me throwt." Followed a howl of laughter, in which Sid joined. Shortage was now a jest. We just drew our belts a little tighter. Luckily we were on the home stretch, only two days out. You can't starve in two days.

And now as the bacon sputtered and the oatmeal exploded in viscous, bursting bubbles, Bill was entertaining a gallery. It was a thriller, the tale of his interview with his king. "The proudest hadwentur' o' me life hoccurred in Lunnon. Ye know Lunnon? Good. One fine harfternoon hI was walkin' in Rottin Raow—ye know Rottin Raow, hof course, w're hall the quality promenades. Well, has hI was sayin', hI was walkin' daown Rottin Raow, w'en hI chawnced to glawnce haround. Walkin' rapid-like toward me hI

saw a stoutish, bearded, 'awndsome bloke. 'E 'ad on a soft 'at an' gray tweeds. hI knew 'im at a glawnce—my King an' Hemperor, for whom hI 'ad fought an' bled, 'is Majesty Hedward the Seventh, King of Gryte Britain an' Hireland an' Hemperor of Hindia. My 'eart leaped, an' hI says to myself, 'walk slower, Bill, an' get a good look at 'im.' An' then hoccurred a hevent thet hI'll remember to me dyin' day, an' hI'll 'and it down in pride to the third an' fourth generations o' me posterity (Bill was an old and hopeless bachelor)—'is Majesty spaoke to me, to me, Bill Noble, a 'umble saoldier of 'is Majesty's harmy an' a defender o' the realm hI was willin' to give me life's blood to defend. Think of hit; 'is Majesty spaoke to me! hI choked wi' pride, an' never a word o' hawnsver could hI make." Bill stopped and a faraway look stole over his face.

Someone bit. "What did the King say to you, Bill?"

"'E said, 'Git aout o' me w'y!' Lord a mercy, look at the bacon scorchin'!" And Bill made a frantic dive to the rescue of the precious skillet, the contents of which he was demurely turning as Sid, dripping wet, came in from saddling. "'Ave a mug o' tea, Sid; quick. 'Tis a nawsty d'y to wrangle 'orses." And Sid looked his gratitude for this thoughtful attention on the part of his minion.

We rode out of Camp Old Soak without a regret, crossed the raging Ottertail with no casualties and were off down the Kicking Horse River. The Ottertail is a misfit in the Rocky Mountains; it was designed for the Selkirks and slipped in among the Rockies by some creative oversight. It dashes down a precipitous

valley with a V-shaped cross section in a series of steps over which the wild current pours in the roughest and whitest of cataracts and curling billows. It was critical fording, but in such situations the sure-footed cayuses test every step and never tread on a loose boulder.

"A voyage," says Robinson Crusoe, "on the quarter deck of a cayuse is always safe."

Our route lay almost at the foot of the Chancellor, and that magnificent peak was sending down rock-avalanches in rapid succession with terrifying crashings, and the bursting rocks threw fragments like shrapnel. We were just a little bit too near for pleasure to the vast cliff. We were impressed, but not entertained, by the bombardment. As evening approached the prevailing storm conditions were dissipated in a gorgeous sunset with marvelous light effects. Floating clouds of rose pink glowed over the entire heavens. A golden sun evoked from them a superb triple rainbow, and through them towered the great pinnacle of the Chancellor. The blazing golden light of the vanishing sun dulled to orange, to peach-blow, to lilac, to purple—and it was night under a canopy glittering with stars.

Our tent was within a yard of the fierce, chill rush of the Kicking Horse, but neither of us is somnambulistically inclined. One misstep into that diabolical current would be the last. Other rivers lull you to sleep with rippled music or with resounding roar. The Kicking Horse is your enemy and hisses at you like a snake. It is an unimpressive river except at the Natural Bridge at Field, which has been artificialized out of most of its beauty by safety-first approaches, and at the splendid Falls, a gorgeous cataract near

our camp which we visited in the morning before our final plunge into the wilderness, for thus far we had paralleled the railway.

As we turned from the river, a backward look showed us many of the glories we had missed in the rain of the previous day. There was the splendid sierra of the Van Horne Range, with the ever conspicuous Mount King now near and dominating. There was the Emerald group with its central *aiguille* and, facing it, the cloud-capped Burgess. The pack train swung into motion, and we entered the somber shadows of a virgin forest, its floor lit and dappled with the splashes of golden light that dropped through the waving fronds of pine that roofed us. The forest floor was conspicuously freckled with thousands of enormous mushrooms and toadstools, enough of the latter to enthrone in gaudy magnificence every rheumatic toad in British Columbia. There were white ones and yellow, red ones of every shade, from pale pink through brick and scarlet to crimson; there were lavender ones and brown; while perhaps the most curiously attractive of all was a huge growth of the puffball order exactly resembling in shape and shading a beautifully baked loaf of fresh bread—and we sentenced to a month of bannock. Rare lichens clothed every fallen trunk which was not as yet decayed to the mossy stage, and wonderful mosses carpeted the more shaded sections, while here and there were great patches of the white and green equisetum—the horse-tail rushes—in which succulent tidbit the cayuses reveled.

The forest was often broken by natural open glades in which grew a profusion of berries of every kind,

all laden with luscious ripe fruit, though the species are characteristic of various seasons everywhere except in the Northland. It was quite surprising to gather at the same time strawberries, red raspberries, splendid blood-red dewberries, huckleberries, both of the blue and of the red varieties; gooseberries, whose spines covered not the branches only but the fruit as well; currants in drooping scarlet clusters, and saskatoons, a large blue-black berry growing in profusion on bushes towering above our heads as we rode. These last had been much vaunted to us, but we found them insipid and of no well-defined flavor, though very sweet. By persistent exercise of the imagination one might in time learn to like them. We even made some jam of them, which we ate—just once. The descent from the delectable jams of the House of Wagstaffe to a saskatoon 'spread' concocted in the forest, was from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The forest, too, was peopled with things of life. Moose vanished among the trees at imminent risk of scraping prematurely those great palmated antlers, now in velvet. Deer disappeared in stiff-legged leaps, while sinister golden-eyed lynxes faded away noiselessly on the mossy carpet or crouched motionless along a limb of spruce. On every watercourse were beaver dams, houses and chippings, though the clever hydraulic engineers themselves were nowhere to be seen. One great birch more than a foot in diameter was half cut through by their terrible incisors, and would be felled that very night in exactly the position in which it would lie most available for the architect's uses. From our camp that night beside a dark lagoon, a veritable *mare au diable*, we enjoyed a superb vista

of Helmet Peak and the three stupendous towers of Goodsir; and as the night darkened the beavers could be heard at their cutting and their building, slapping the water, apparently for the sheer fun of it, with their great trowel-like tails or putting into place with those same trowels the mud-cement of their dams.

Zinc Mountain, with its weird stratifications, towered near us as we marched away across a trouty-looking little brook that was the beginning of the great Kootenai River whose line we were now to follow. The tiny source of a great river is one of the most impressive things in nature. The meadows of the upper Kootenai, into which we debouched from the forest, are a marvel of rich grass land destined one day to be, as Homer says of Argos, "nourisher of noble horses." These meadows, with their lush pasturage, alternate with patches of dense forest. They are ancient lake beds walled in by the Beaverfoot, Vermilion and Mitchell Ranges; the first rounded, worn and denuded, the two latter with tremendous vertical walls, high unnamed peaks and splendid glaciers. Again we entered the forest and, after an easy march, encamped beside the Kootenai, now a sizable stream of crystal clearness abounding in hungry trout. Near the camp was a trapper's cabin belonging to that great man of the woods, Manuel Dainard. It was better built and better equipped than most of these lonely cabins of the winter wilds, and was conspicuously decorated with a magnificent pair of moose antlers above the door. It was fairly comfortable, though it bore mute witness to the lonely life led by its winter tenants. Bad enough is it to live out a winter alone on the trapping lines; but for two men thus in enforced companionship the

nerve tension must be terrible. Every trifling difference becomes a quarrel; and the marvel is that these quarrels so rarely end in violence. The enforced association of the tenants of this cabin during the preceding winter must have produced an acute situation. Inside the cabin the "handwriting on the wall" showed that the men, for a time at least, were not on speaking terms, or did not dare remonstrate with each other. Those written messages, curiously intimate in their nature, were scribbled wherever the surface was smooth enough to admit a penciled line.

"Andy is too damn lazy to melt a bucket of snow water," we learned; while an epigraphic countercharge complained, "Bill won't cut wood any more; the loafing devil."

One cause of the tension may possibly be indicated by the following entry, diary fashion: "March 10. Saw a snow snake three feet long!"

What marvelous moose country it was. There need be no lack of moose venison during a winter in that cabin. Even now, in the summer, the river bank was tracked by moose as by a herd of cattle.

The next day brought trouble. Fire had swept the country before us toward the Vermillion, a tributary of the Kootenai, and a great storm had piled the dead trunks in confusion worse confounded. Through this heaped-up tangle was a freshly-cut approximation to a trail. We marched between walls of timber higher than our horses' backs, strongly reminded of that olden day campaign of Cæsar in Brittany when he started to cut down a forest that covered half of northwestern Europe, and piled the trunks on either side of his advancing columns to ward off the attacks

of the barbarians. In a breathing spot in the tangle ahead gleamed a little green tent, and the stroke of axes thudded the air. It was Dainard himself with two other men clearing trail against the autumn hunt. We had met this mighty Nimrod before, and to come upon him again in the wilderness was a keen pleasure. His talk was of the chase and the trail, and his adventures would make a movie thriller seem a monotonous series of commonplace happenings. He looked ill, and was even then beginning to suffer from the dread malady which in another year took him away. Only his indomitable will kept him going and furnished the power behind the rhythmic swing of his skilled axe. As we reached the limit of the newly-cut trail and were bidding him farewell for the last time, he proposed to me a literary partnership in which I was to edit his own accounts of his thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes. Such a record would have been a lasting delight for sportsmen the country over. He lived to send but one letter. I give it here exactly as it came to me, with its vagaries of grammar and orthography and punctuation, not in ridicule but as an original document of true history. There are none whose feelings it can wound. Dainard's typewriter evidently played more tricks with him than his cayuses ever dared attempt.

"Well. Mr. Mitchail. you ask Me for some of My experiances. in the Mountains Re. Bear. Hunting now Sir I will tel you what happened to Me and pardners while out Hunting Bear near Golden, B. C. well there was Four of us we went out to the South Fork of the Spollichain.¹ River. in May. for to Hunt and Trap

¹ Spillimacheen.

Bear now we Packed out there some 35. Miles from Golden. with Horses which took us Two Days to get there when we pitched our Camp the began to look around for Bears. which we found to be fairly plenty-full so we bwgan to set our Dead falls and traps which we spent about Four Days doing in the meain time we saw Severl Bear. ther was one place A Slide where the Grass was Green about half a Mile from our Camp we could see Black Bear come out there to Feed every afternoon about Five Oclock. to feed on this Grass so on the Fifth Day Two of My Pardners said tomorrow We go and Shoot Mr. Black. Bear. so on the six they went about Two Oclock. so as to be sure and get there before the Black. Bear. came there Names was Frank. and. Fread. they got there and fixed up a good hide for themselves and preapered to wait for some two hours but to their surprise they was not there more than half an Hour before Fred looked up and saw a great Big Grizely. Bear. come out where they expected to see the Black. then Fred Nugged Frank. saying look Big Grizely get ready to shoot but Frank being the Oldest Hunter got hold of Fred. and said do not Shoot for sure We dont Kill Him dead he kill both of us. We not look for Grizely. Bear. come we go to Camp make no noise so Fred being young in the Buissnes done as Frank thought Best. so they came to Camp without any Bear. that time Frank. saying he no lok for Grizely. Bear. He catch them in Dead fall so after a short time after they came back to Camp Fred look up there and saw the Black Bear come out on the Slide saing come Frank and we get him but Frank said no to many Grizely for Me so Fred turned to Me to Come with him all right I will

go with you and see what we can do Frank saying you to Fools Grizely. Bear. catch you both never the less we went and got there just as we was ready to take a Shot at the Black. Bear. we saw him start and look up so we looked up to and there was the big grizwely. bear feeding away so we waited for a short time so they would come a little closer. then we both agreed to both shoot toghther first at the Grizely. then at the Black. we having both of us good Winchter. Rifles. caring about six Shot each so then the Fun began we both Fired at the Grizely. Bear. at about one hundred yards Down he went but up he got and started for us and we Fired again and down he went again by this time the Black started to run so we turned on him both of us and we gave him two Shots a peace and stoped his Carear. then we turned our attentin on the Wounded Grizelry which was trying to get up and come for us but we had him to badly Shot up to do much damage so we went over to where he was and Shot him in the Head and finished him then went to see our Black Bear which we found dead so you see all it requires is a little nearev and good judjment in going after them so the other Two after hearing the Shooting came out to see what had become of us and to their surprise wehen they saw the two bear and the big Grizely being one of them Frank said you to Fools will be cought yet but we are both alive yet but Fred came very near being cought a few Days later on as we was going out to see our Traps one Morning we saw three Grizelys up on the Mountain side where the brush was thick that is to get a fair Shot at them so I went up above them and chased them down the hillside so Fred could get a Shot at them I wounded one of them

one of the others would not turn for Me and while I was trying to get the one I had Shot at he got away Fred firing several long shots at him but to far off the third one went straight for Fred and he Fired Four Shots at him and he came right on for him Fred never thought of how many Shots he had Fired when the big Grizwely rose up on his hind feet to grab him he pulled his Trigger but no report came his Gun was empty so he jumped to one side just as the Bear reached for him taring a part of his Shirt away with him then began a Race for life the Bear being badly wounded and Fred had his Dog with him who Fought the Bear well gave him time to get away from him untill I got there now Fred was a scared Boy that time all right so we Finished him the Cripple Bear. and with the dog we went after the one I had Wounded and we found him in a short disdance from where I last shot at him that was as close as I got to see anyone to a big Grizely Bear now that is about all the axcitement we had on that trip we got Five in our Traps making Nine in all Four Grizelys and Five Black Bear. one nigh we saw nine bears from our Camp. Frank was a French Man and after that all we had to say let us go to Camp for if we tont kill him dead he kill both of us then we would have one Mad French. Man, you young Fools would be cought yot he would say I no lose Big Grizely Bear I catch them in Trap"

M. Dainard.

We were now "on our own." It was a perfect *impasse*. Chafing at the ill luck, we fell to with our axes. All we could do was to try to reduce the height of the heaped logs to that of a five-barred gate. The cayuses could leap that. All that day we cut and

struggled, and at nightfall a weary bunch pitched Camp Impromptu and rested for the task of the morrow, drowning our sorrows in the blessed flagon—of tea. The morrow came, and all day we chopped and hewed. In the two days we had made two miles' progress and we howled with delight when at last we pitched Camp Out-of-the-Woods beside the swift Vermillion and turned the horses out to graze in open forest while we slept the sleep of the just and weary in recuperation for the morrow's attack on the Briscoe Pass, the last barrier that parted us from the Columbia.

The forested approach to the pass was a beautiful march. The trail lay in fine grassy levels shaded by trees growing as openly as in the Cohonino Forest of our Arizona canyon rim, and growing therefore with an equally beautiful spread of bough. Indeed, the tract more closely resembled that splendid forest of the Southwest than any other northern wooded tract I have ever traversed. As we threaded our way among those graceful trees, the tinkle of a bell came to our ears. A moment more, and a man with two lean and heavily-packed cayuses met us. He was a prospector, a typical one, at that; a little old man, unbelievably ragged, down and through whose long tangled gray beard trickled and oozed several independent rivulets and swamps of tobacco juice. He had picked up a grub stake somewhere, and was off, with Fortune dancing alluringly just ahead, beckoning, beckoning, smiling, smiling, as She had beckoned and smiled through all of his wasted past. He hailed us in unfeigned amazement. A pack train in that wilderness was a blow to him. He believed we had got the

start of him some way and had already staked out all the rich claims he knew should have been his.

"Whar d'ye come from?" he hailed in terse curiosity.

"Field," said we with equal terseness.

"Whar 'r' ye goin'?"

"Banff."

"My Gawd! Ye didn't haf ter come clar dow hyer ter git ter Banff."

Travel for the beauty of travel was undreamt of in his philosophy. He was perfectly sure we were lying to him.

Slowly the ground commenced to rise, and we were soon straining upward toward the crest of the Beaverfoot Range along a steep, atrocious trail diversified with varied forms of trail villainy from rock slides to the blackest of black muskeg. There were, however, none of those charmingly refreshing mountain torrents cutting the trail to give cooling relief to men and horses. The day was extremely hot. The sun poured down through the open and diminishing timber, and the torments of thirst began. Farther up, a pitiful little seeping spring gave some relief, and in a brief halt we turned to look back. We were so tired that we hadn't thought of doing it before. Fatigue dulls the æsthetic impulse. The beautiful valley of the upper Kootenai lay outspread before us like a map, and the distant rampart of the Mitchell Range,¹ with its glittering icy peaks, nameless and unexplored, shot back the sun's rays from their glaciers and snow fields, while their rocks and crags were bathed in the violet light of mountain distance.

¹The writer is in no way connected with this nomenclature.

But we simply had to turn our backs on beauty and get across the pass. The Beaverfoot is a comparatively low range, thus accounting for the lack of the usual clear water of the melting upper snows. The crest of the Briscoe Pass is a waterless plateau with sparse scraggly timber. The soil, thin and sunbaked, rose in swirls of dust under the feet of the thirsty cayuses, and was scantily grown with parched grass and dotted with the purple stars of the leafless onion lily—*colchicum*. A few pairs of shed elk antlers revealed the denizens of the western slopes of the Beaverfoot. The descent began across mesa-like terraces overlooking the wonderful valley of the upper Columbia. Beyond the river rose the mighty peaks of the Southern Selkirks, white with their superabounding snow and ice. What would we not have given for a bit of it right then! The horses, mad with thirst, threatened to stampede. They knew there was water at the foot of that long parched trail, and they broke into a nervous trot. Sid was ahead trying to control the pack. Robinson Crusoe and I played rearguard, watching the saddle horses and rounding up the strays. Our riding horses stubbornly refused to be guided after the stragglers. Their noses were pointed straight toward the great river shining silvery in the westering sun. We leaped from the saddle and took up the hot dusty task on foot, first dog-trotting to keep the horses in line, as the latter went faster and faster, breaking into a swift run. That trail was never-ending. One shelf crossed, from which we were certain we could see the foot of the Pass, only another mesa showed below us. Sage brush was everywhere now, eloquently telling the arid character of the

landscape. The horses were crazy. The runners, dry-throated, dust-strangled, felt that they could not take another step at that killing pace—and then took it.

But all mortal things end, and so did that heaven-abandoned trail. We reached the rim of the last terrace, and what hearts we had left were thankful. We hit up fresh speed, and famished with thirst fought for place with the crowding pack massed belly deep in a clear cold brook. Water never before had been so sweet, nor rest on the fragrant pine boughs, so welcome.

Our plan was to recross the Beaverfoot by the Sinclair Pass, a day's march southward and one of the rare instances of vulcanism in the Canadian Rockies. A wonderful hot spring bubbles forth at the foot of the pass, known to the Indians for centuries, and still used by them. The curative properties of the almost boiling waters are locally celebrated, especially in rheumatic ailments. One enthusiastic hunter, laid by the heels as the result of exposure, claimed to have been carried to the thermal waters in a blanket litter and to have kicked the ridge pole of the tent after one bath. Allowing the proper discounts, this tale convinced us that the waters were really beneficial. Therefore as Nip had been painfully stiffened by the all-pervading saturation at the Ottertail, a two days' stop was planned. In these days those who cared to do so could ride on to the Windermere Lakes, the sources of the great Columbia River, and the others could dissolve the rheumatism out of their bones. "That," said Nip when the plan was discussed, "is a fine solution of the problem." By a majority vote

she was pardoned. The march up the Columbia was scorchingly hot and stiflingly dusty. This great valley is here open and timberless and, with irrigation, will ultimately develop into fine fruit land. Hour after hour we marched, baking in the blazing sun and looking longingly across the river into the West where Ethelbert towered in icy grandeur and all the rest of the snowy giants of the southern Selkirks gleamed and glistened with their tremendous snow fields and glaciers. O for their cool breezes and chill dashing torrents! But they smiled on us maliciously from afar, as who shall say, "Drill, ye terriers, drill! We've wrung the West Wind dry and robbed it of all the comfort it could bring you—and we're glad of it." Robinson Crusoe says he's had a grouch at the Selkirks ever since.

We turned abruptly to the east and toiled up a great, rounded, barren foothill from which even the grass had been parched away. As we topped the huge swell, a veritable "Sheba's Breast," a cry of wonder broke from all. The eastern slope of the hill, beautifully timbered with dark lustrous pines, fell away toward a great basin from which a rugged volcanic gateway opened toward the Sinclair Pass itself. The pass began as a canyon-like gorge, and rose steeply in one vast rocky reach, so different from the terraces of the Briscoe, to the rugged skyline of the Beaver-foot crest. The gateway was wonderland. Outcropping vertical walls of rock, hurled up edgewise through the surrounding strata by some awful convulsion of the past, cut them in twain like a Satanic knife blade. These walls were a bewildering palette of colors. Brilliant yellows clashed in the gaudy color

scheme with scarlets, crimsons, purples and bright iron-rust browns; and all in a vivid relief against a mighty background of pale pearl gray. All these kaleidoscopic colors, blazing strikingly forth in the foreground as by the explosion of some vast geologic dye-works, faded gradually away, as the eye followed the rise of the pass, to a faraway somberness of granite gray and brown. It was a petrified spectrum, overwhelming in its unworldly vivid beauty. Down through the gateway tumbled a dashing mountain torrent, and beside the stream was a great pool, walled up with moss-grown rocks ages ago by the Indians, about twenty by ten feet in area and three or four feet deep. This pool was filled by two copious springs; one, practically of boiling temperature, bubbling forth from a bed of pebbles together with millions of globules of volcanic gas; the other gushing not two feet away, and of icy coldness. Only the presence of this second spring enables the pool to be entered. We, of course, had no opportunity to make any chemical analysis of the water. It was tasteless, odorless, and beautifully clear. One emerged from it looking like a human lobster, and the water, upon drying, left a fine powder on the skin. It was the deadly enemy of all dyes and colors. An improvised bathing suit, consisting in part of a red sweater, aged, fast-dyed and many times washed, in a second of time turned the entire basin into a pool of blood. This effect was instantaneous, not gradual. But the waters wrought a miracle. Three baths seemed entirely to dissolve away the rheumatism of our sufferer, nor did the symptoms recur for over two years. This sounds



Photo by H. C. Petersen.

Lower Spray Lake. The white tents of the party are on the point at left. (See p. 154.)



The Pool, Sinclair Hot Spring. (See p. 176.)

like the "ad" of a whole sanitarium of quacks; but the miracle of healing was nature's own.

We dared not overstay our two-day limit, for pasturage was of the scantiest, and we must cross the Sinclair before the horses starved to weakness. The morning of our departure the hungry cayuses had strayed far, and several hours were spent in rounding them up. One by one they were brought in; finally Little Buck alone was unaccounted for. Again we all sallied forth to the search. Of set purpose I personally elected to search the crest of the foothill we had crossed to enter the wonderland, and I fear that I turned from the blazing rocks of the Sinclair gateway to the snowy Selkirks rising in wondrous beauty above the white blanket of fog that covered the river valley like a flood, and back again to the painted cliffs, far more ardently than I sought to lead into the fold that erring cayuse who was "out on the hills away, far off from the gates of gold." Talk about luck: it was mine to spy him at last, wholly by accident, nibbling bush-leaves under a spreading pine not fifty feet from where I sat. Some earn merit in this world: some have merit thrust upon them.

With keen regret we emulated Lot's wife in backward, longing looks at all the beauty of sulphur and iron and manganese dyes as we splashed up the bed of the wild torrent, our only egress from the box canyon which forms the eastern approach to this strange volcanic paradise. At last we were able to exchange stumbling over wet rocks for stumbling over dry ones. Emerging from our foot-and-leg baptism by the horses plodding and splashing through boiling rapids, we tackled a steep slope where the alleged trail

skirted a dizzy precipice and lay along a narrow ledge plentifully paved with loose rocks of sporting size—baseballs, footballs, basketballs, with tennis balls in the interstices—all in unstable equilibrium. Often the brave little cayuses would strike a trial balance on three feet while they pawed for a safe footing with the fourth. Hats off to them! They took us up that Sheolish trail (“hellish” is considered impolite and savors of ultra realism) with never a stumble.

Safe at last in the timber, we struck easy going; for Sinclair Pass is not a lofty one and the crest is well below timber line. As we entered the grateful shade of the pines of the summit plateau the golden rays of the declining sun shot level between the trunks like a million search-light beams. We were in a wondrous temple with gilded floor, its mighty roof of darkened green upheld by golden pillars. The trail through those sun-shot aisles skirted a charming baptismal pool, a tiny lakelet whose perfect circle of peridot green water was alive with trout. Hundreds, thousands of them poised motionless and unafraid as we passed; multitudes of others rose and sank and circled and slowly swam in tantalizing mazes, with gently waving fins and fanning tails. Is there to be imagined for the keen angler a hereafter more dreadful than to spend an eternity by such a lake and have no fly to cast?

We dropped over the eastern slope and entered the valley of the shadows. Darkness was hastening on apace, and it was a long, long way to any possible camp ground. The trail was vile, and of idiotic construction. The muskeg was soft and clinging, and the short cut was never taken. It was as if “Detour”

signs were nailed to every tenth tree. Besides, that trail sought out all the minor hillocks on the mountain side and climbed them. It was an old trail used by the Indians from time immemorial. New trails are fairly straight, but windfalls and obstructions are never removed. The Indian simply goes around them and cuts—if he is fresh and enthusiastic—an extra blaze or two; then every later comer follows unquestioning and unreasoning in his tracks, and detours around every obstruction in that. Down, down, down, into the gloom of heavy timber arched by the gloom of the low cloud canopy of a swift approaching storm. Crossing the range had taken us effectually out of the narrow semi-arid belt. Pleasant prospect! At the first level spot at the edge of the Kootenai flats we halted to pitch Camp Erebus. There was scant pasturage but abundant water. We couldn't see it in the blackness, but we knew it was there just the same. We splashed around in oozes of it, while more of it splashed down on our heads. There are greater pleasures than outspanning a pack train in wet, inky blackness. But at last we got a roaring fire which illuminated enough of the forest of small dripping jack-pines to enable us to unpack and hobble the horses, to select, each group for itself, a camp site, pitch the tents and warm up a pot of beans, which, praise Heaven! Sid, with admirable foresight, had cooked the day before. The lack of grass had its inevitable sequence and the horses decamped during the night—villains! With benedictions (?) on their devoted heads we rounded them up in a two-hour job of tracking. Sid's temper was sadly frayed and his remarks scintillated and scorched. It was always easy to tell

when Sid was really angry with a deep and abiding grouch. Then his cuss-words sparkled with originality. They were fresh-minted coinage of new issue, each one the vivid product of a brainstorm. When he was merely peeved, he employed the current idioms of the packer and the horse wrangler; one remembered to have heard the expressions previously and elsewhere.

The lovely valley of the Kootenai between the Sinclair and Briscoe Passes again alternates forest and grassy park-land deeply grown with rich grasses, and even finer than similar tracts along the upper reaches of the valley. It was the ideal home of the moose and of the blacktail deer. At the confluence of the Vermilion and the Kootenai we camped on our old camp ground—Camp Out-of-the-Woods—and after supper Robinson Crusoe ceremoniously fired up his beloved, precious pipe and sought solace for his soul. Unceremoniously he snatched it from his lips, looked at it doubtfully, sniffed at it inquiringly, and commented: "This morning, like a tamdt fool, I have packed my tobacco together with my soap. Now I do not know whether to wash with it or smoke it."

Our purpose was now to march up the Vermilion to its junction with the Simpson, then up the latter river and take Mount Assiniboine in reverse. The trail alternates muskeg and steep cut-banks, down one of which Kicking Buck rolled, pack and all, bringing up against a tree. He lay flat on his back atop of his pack, all four legs in air helplessly wig-wagging an S. O. S. The case was urgent; Buck was rescued without damage, but there wasn't even time for a photograph. Here misfortune struck hard in the total collapse of

two of the pack. At the junction of the blue-milk glacial Vermilion and the clear dashing Simpson is a great natural sulphur lick. Moose and deer had churned up the mud around it like cattle in a barnyard. The horses went crazy for the delectable confection; and here, for a peaceful death, we abandoned poor old Snow, of late christened No-go, pawing and sniffing at the mineral-charged mud, and too weak to eat. The other horse, whom we had suggestively dubbed Loco, in recognition of his total lack of "horse-sense," we hauled and pushed with us.

The evening found the crippled expedition well up the Simpson at the mouth of a forbidding box canyon, forced to make Camp Necessity in one of the most fearful storms of rain, thunder and lightning it has ever been my fortune to see in the mountains. The morning was no better and the prospects were evil. It was one of those storms which simply form the habit and don't know when or how to stop. It was obviously impossible to reach Assiniboine under such conditions, and the shortness of the food supply precluded an indefinite wait for clearing weather. The storm was unabated, spectacular and impressive. Ragged cloud wraiths swept in ghostly procession between the vertical walls of that canyon-trap and crowded it full with torn wisps of chill gray clamminess; and past our primitive bivouac roared the clear Simpson, its water thick with fingerling trout. Sorrowfully we turned back to the Vermilion, defeated for once, and marched for the Simpson Pass, a fairly easy traverse for the weakened horses. Our old camp opposite the Window welcomed us hospitably, and the day following we limped into Banff,

happy in the memory of a long, delightful journey whose hardships of the moment became pleasures in retrospect; and happy, too, in the immediate promise of a luxurious swim in the famous thermal pools of that little city among the peaks.

CHAPTER VIII

ACROSS THE PASSES TO THE ATHABASKA

The base Camp by the Bow. The Squaw. Branding. Forest Camp. Camp rules. Bow Park, Tragedy, Crowfoot Glacier. Bow Lake once more. Over the pass and down the Ojinjah. Canyon of the Ojinjah. Crossing the Saskatchewan. The rest camp. Tossing flapjacks. The poet's cabin. Hard march up North Fork of Saskatchewan. Panther Fall. Climbing Athabaska's shoulder. North Saskatchewan Glacier and the Columbia Ice Field. The disappointment at Wilcox Pass. Over Nigel Pass to the Brazeau. Jonas Pass. The traverse of Jonas Shoulder. Pobokton. Maligne Pass. Paul's goat. Maligne Lake. Narrow escape. Flying Goose Glacier. Shovel Pass. The Athabaska at last.

A RAILWAY freight station isn't an ideal dressing room. It seriously lacks two important requisites to comfort in costuming; 'modern conveniences' and privacy. This much may be said, however: it makes for speedy performance. And when the pack train is waiting outside, speed is a desideratum. We had swung out of the Pullmans at Laggan that rainy July morning. Our trunks were hauled quickly to the freight station; and there we were with luggage strewn all over the floor, getting into our camp togs and making up packs, in perfectly proper and conventional relays assorted according to sex and relationships. In an hour we were *en train* for the base camp. The usual training camp was foregone this season, and we were to get into trail condition by the stern

realities of trail travel. Sid had, however, set up a base camp where he had assembled all the supplies and paraphernalia of the expedition. The camp had been pitched in an amphitheater beside the Bow, in a spruce grove with open glades, commanding a superb view of the stately Laggan group—Temple, Lefroy and peerless snow-clad Victoria. The individual camps were soon set up, the bough beds made, and each article stowed where we could put our hands on it even in the dark. If you can't learn to do that, keep out of the woods: you'll be a misery to yourself, a nuisance to your companions. When all was ship-shape, we just loafed around and invited our souls—so far as souls are open to invitation in a misty rain which Sid said had been falling for two weeks. Signs appeared, however, of the clouds breaking—in our honor, of course—and somebody yelled, "I see a ray of sunlight on Lefroy."

"Shut up, you optimist," cried Robinson Crusoe, "Just give thanks that there's a Lefroy to catch your ray. It would have been lost otherwise."

Night drew near, dimming the magnificence around us; and when darkness fell we gathered to the tipi fire and saw visions in the dancing flames. The tipi is one of the important gifts of the Indian to civilization, the only tent in which an open fire can be kindled. It is the most romantic of all dwellings, with its sloping conical walls, smoke-browned toward the apex like rarest meerschaum. Under all weather conditions it is the acme of wilderness comfort, if one is careful always to have the smoke-wings open to leeward. If this be neglected, you roll out of a tipi into God's

great outdoors with stinging, smoke-bleared eyes, thankful that He made the world so large.

We sat and stared the bright fire out of countenance, too happy and 'comfy' to talk. I like that word 'comfy': it connotes a perfection of care-free ease of mind and body that the more prosaic and materialistic 'comfortable' never can convey. The door flap was pulled aside and an aged woman entered uninvited yet with a stately courtesy. She was a squaw of the Chaba (Beaver) clan of the Stony Indians, a woman of the aristocracy and a priestess of sorts among her tribe. "How?" she said, in the universal greeting of the Amerind. "How?" we replied. She joined the circle about the fire, and sat still and silent, puffing at her pipe. Some marshmallows were welcomed with evident appreciation but without acknowledgment. Then she broke into reminiscent soliloquy. She recounted in fair English the events of her long life in a rapt monologue; the days of her girlhood, when game was abundant, when men were brave and wars were relentless; when tribe attacked tribe and ruined their huntings grounds by firing the forests—the gaunt charred walls of Belgian factories, the ruined mines of Lens, were no newly-conceived forms of deviltry. She told of the summer and winter migrations, the dressing of skins, the curing of fish and flesh, the making of medicine and the reading of the future. We sat spellbound before this Witch of En-Dor, and when she faded away into the night we crept in silence to the strewn boughs. The charm of her "medicine" was upon us and was only broken when Nip, creeping into our little canoe tent,

sniffed the fragrant air appreciatively, and said: "Um-m-m-m; smells like Christmas."

The closeness with which the wilderness encroaches upon civilization was illustrated that night when a black bear raided Sid's tent and got away with his rucksack. It was a curiously mischievous bear, for not content with ripping open the sack, it tore to fragments a bundle of letters in the sack and scattered them in tiny bits to the four winds. "Evidently," said Robinson Crusoe, "that was a male bear."

Sid had bought some new horses for this expedition, the most ambitious yet undertaken, and these must be branded with the "Circle U"—before we set out. The branding iron was heated to whiteness and then quickly applied to the horse's flank. A little curl of smoke, a taint of scorched hair drifting by, and all was over. There was no kicking and plunging by the horses; only a little cringing away from the iron. The last hitch was thrown, the last cinch tightened. Came the familiar order: "Stand by your horses." Then, "Everybody wound up?" We tested cinches. "Mount!" We swung into the saddles and were off for the Northland of the Athabaska, riding high along the mighty flanks of Hector. The weather was full of promise—of the wrong thing—and kept it. A solar grease spot floated dimly on high. The air was damp and gusty. But there was no fog and the higher we climbed the more glorious was the view outspread to front and rear. Behind us was a full panorama of the Laggan group, while ahead we caught fascinating glimpses, through changing light effects in alternate sun and shower, of the rugged Dolomites, whose broken rocky skyline resembles nothing so much as a hectic fever

chart. We camped at about 6500 feet in the finest of pasturage and under a leaky sky. The celestial plumbing was utterly ruined. The forage was so abundant that, although we made camp at about 2 : 30 P. M., the horses were kept tethered until nearly seven o'clock lest they eat their fill and back-trail to the corral comforts of Laggan. Robinson Crusoe, as always, explored. He returned beaming with enthusiasm. "Come. I've found some wonderful saxifrage on the high rocks. It's only a couple of hundred feet up." It was a thousand, if it was an inch: but the lovely beds of delicate saxifrage—"the rock breaker"—fully repaid the effort. The frail roots seek out the crevices in the rocks; the moisture seeps along the roots; then come the frosts of winter and the expanding ice wedges do their perfect work. At this first camp of the expedition the usual camp rules were promulgated; and past experience dictated two new ones. Always make your camp rules in advance of any need for their enforcement, else somebody will get 'sore' and think them a personal affront. The new ones were: "Thou shalt not borrow any axe from any person for any purpose whatsoever," and, "Thou shalt eat all thy food from off thy plate at every meal." A long expedition can brook no waste, and a dull axe is of small use in a region where axes are a vital necessity.

Still the rain came down. I spread wide the flaps of our tent and kindled a roaring fire before it, and we sat on our soft bough beds in dryness and in warmth until Nip compared our two selves to two bannocks baking in a reflector. Always take a tent into the wild waterproofed and fireproofed for just

this purpose. Eschew the vaunted balloon silk as you would the Devil—one spark and you are homeless. We dined luxuriously in the rain, though the meal was rather casual. We ran for the cook-fire, grabbed a plateful of ‘grub’ and a tin-cup of tea, and ran back to shelter. The new cook was a huge success, an artist in his line, Reginald Holmes by name, promptly metamorphosed to Sherlock. That moist meal consisted of boiled ‘spuds’ and a famous pot of army beans with cubes of bacon boiled with them, and a dash of mustard dressing from Crosse and Blackwell’s incomparable pickles gave your portion a delightful piquancy, which led Jack Greaves, the horse wrangler, to exclaim with the reverence becoming in a loyal subject: “Even the King hasn’t got what we have to-night.” Jack was an Irishman “of purest ray serene,” and he and “Reg.” added to the life and merriment of the party as only perfect trail men can.

We marched in snow and bitter cold up the valley of the Bow. Unworldly beauty was all around us; Hector, the Dolomites, the icy Wahputiks rising blackly from the ice field behind them reaching to the Yoho. There rose, too, Mt. Gordon, Bow Mountain and unnumbered others, each demanding to hold the center of this titanic stage. We rode among wonderful flowers, with a pang as each lovely blossom fell bruised by the cayuses’ tread: graceful, pale green spikes of the *zygodena* nodded greeting to us in the gale, and everywhere was the blazing *epilobium*, one freak specimen having petals deep red outside and white on the inner surface. Despite the beauties of the scene it was so cold that we were not sorry to enter heavy timber, a fine shelter from the fierce winds,

and in the timber we stayed till we debouched into Bow Park and set up camp in that loveliest of mountain meadows. There, thoroughly weary and chilled to the bone, we were soon lolling by a great fire in the tipi, drinking the blessed tea. The gale blew the clouds from a clearing sky, and it was still bright twilight at half-past ten o'clock. It is the precious gift of prolonged light in summer that, notwithstanding the mountain chill, matures in the brief season the wonderful flowers and berries of the Northland.

As we rested in the tipi after the work of the day, listening to Sailor Jack's tales of the sea, Oliver Twist suddenly gave a great leap and landed with his boots in the embers.

"Look out, Oliver! You'll burn your feet."

"A big spark just lit on my stomach," explained Oliver frantically brushing, "and I value that more just now than I do my feet. You see, it has my supper in it."

In the "wee sma' hours" sounds of tragedy floated forth from a near-by tent. It was Corkie's voice, in deprecation and abject apology: "I hate to kill you"—whack! whack!—"I've put you out twice, and nearly froze doing it"—whack!—"I hate to kill you, but I must"—whack!—"You won't stay out"—whack—"and I need my shoes myself!"—whack! whack!! whack!!! "Now will you be good?" It was only Corkie killing an intruding porcupine with her absurd little toy belt-axe, and, Indian fashion, explaining to her victim the necessity for her act.

The charm of Bow Park as a camp ground is unforgettable. Even the horses did not stray during the night, and as they stood tethered for packing in

the morning's frost, under the shadow of the picturesque Dolomites, a beautiful mule deer with wide sweep of velveted antlers walked in among them, curiously watching what was going on in what he considered his own domain. The march in an icy gale gave us once more magnificent views of the Crowfoot Glacier pouring its oddly-shaped blue stream down from the Wahputik Ice Field. We could view all this beauty more in comfort instead of in the intervals of hauling horses out of muskeg, for the high trail to Bow Lake had been cleared at last and we followed it with deep thankfulness. Bow Lake gleamed beautifully below us, traversed by passing cloud shadows and at its farther end the huge Bow Glacier, which in the Ice Age had scooped out the lake bed and then receded, broke into seracs and crevasses and, still a mighty ice cascade, rose far up to the Wahputik Ice Field, to descend on the other side of the divide as the Wapta Glacier at the head of the Yoho.

The great open slope from the crest of the Bow Pass to the lake, the lake itself, and the fine mountains fringing it, formed a wonderful stage setting for our little camp village. This enormous amphitheater is always swept by violent winds, and the sparse timber, the firs and spruces alike, not only incline away from the prevailing winds but reach out their branches beseechingly to leeward as though imploring relief from the violence and continuity of the gales. Their efforts to resist result in a fine network of curling twigs, living and dead, which will burst into flame in the rarefied air at the touch of a match. Our bivouac quite earned its name, Camp Gusty, but every tent held to its moorings. The long acclivity to the

pass and the flower-starred crest itself with the old familiar circus rings, now filled with water, were a delight. These rings seemed to be formed by layer growing upon layer of sphagnum moss, the lowermost layers rotting only in an original slight depression within the ring. The view backward over the lake and down the Wahputik Range was entrancing. The pass was decked out in red and gold; red epilobium and painted cups, gold-and-brown solidago, so unlike its eastern cousin the golden rod, lemon yellow potentilla, and everywhere the wild pea vines (*latyrus*), the flowers snow white, edged with blue. The varieties of *latyrus* are simply infinite in these mountains, and every pass seems to have its own favorite color scheme of them. The mountain vistas at the crest of the pass fairly swept us from our æsthetic moorings. To the left, Thompson, with its hanging glacier; to the right, Observation Peak, covered with new snow; and in the distance the wonderful reach of the valley of the Ojinjah and all its giants, Murchison, Silverhorn and castellated Bungalow, faced across the valley by beautiful Peyto Lake, blue and shimmering. Goat Mountain, with its two glaciers and great cirque; and on beyond, the snowy cap of Howse Peak and Pyramid Peak, and the triple Sarbach. Far, far away shone the snow ranges north of the Saskatchewan, Turret and Terrace, and Mount Saskatchewan; while silhouetted sharp against the northern sky rose the exalted horn of Mount Athabaska, ten days' march away.

We pushed on over the pass and came to a tangle of down timber, over which we jumped, straddled, climbed and stepped, and around whose ends we

dodged when we could. Ojinjah, the black bear, and Ojinjah tunga, his huge cousin, the grizzly, faded from the trail before us into the forest; while from Ripple Camp, beside the dancing wavelets of the upper Ojinjah Wapta (River of the Bear) and opposite the precipices of Pyramid, we watched through the binoculars Kishkashin, the goat, marshaling his family on the dizzy steeps, and his little kiddie nonchalantly draining the fount of his evening meal.

Crowns of mist gathered grandly about the hoary heads of Pyramid and Sarbach under the clear rays of the cloudless morning sun as we made ready for the march down the Ojinjah to another climate, the hot valley of the Saskatchewan. The Ojinjah Valley narrowed rapidly after we passed the sparkling Waterfowl Lakes. It was a hard, hot trail, and the morning clouds provokingly veiled the heads of the great peaks. The valley drew together into a canyon; the Ojinjah roared louder and louder as its current was compressed to a ribbon, and poured in a furious leap over a ledge into a canyon not more than ten feet wide at its entrance, over one hundred feet deep and narrowing in places to four or five feet. The violence of the water was terrifying.

"What if one should fall in?"

"He'd be drowned to pieces," said Sid solemnly.

On the rim of the canyon were great pot holes in which a man could conceal himself, formed at flood by a rolling rock grinding, mill-like, in some slight depression in the soft strata. In one place the canyon was completely bridged, and through its self-carved conduit roared the water.

Our old friend, Camp Ojinjah, greeted us in the



The Ojinjah Wapta Plunging into the Canyon. (See p. 192.)



Sid Tossing Flapjacks. The flapjack can be plainly seen exactly under the cross and on a level with Sid's eye. (See p. 195.)

same hospitable fashion as before, with mosquitoes, green-eyed bulldogs, trout and grayling. We should have been in for a still warmer reception had I not discovered in the nick of time a huge nest of great red-bellied ants with jaws like a blacksmith's pincers, close to the most eligible camp site on the flat. Buffalo birds flitted tamely around the horses, dull black with heads of brownish gray. They were incredibly tame: one trustful little fellow permitted himself to be picked up. The ground was covered with the vines of the mossberry, whose dried leaves constitute the pungent kinni-kinnick, the Indians' substitute for tobacco.

"You smoke it," commented Sid, "and then turn greenish pink."

The fording of the Saskatchewan on the morrow was a serious task. The clear weather of the past few days had raised the river to the danger point. Building a raft for us and our goods and swimming the horses was seriously discussed. But Sid went prospecting with a long pole and found a possible ford with a safe bottom. The dangers of fording in these northern rivers are very real. If the river bed is not of rolling rocks, it is liable to be of quicksand. The river would surely be lower in the morning, so it was decided to attempt the ford, but we were given careful instructions what to do in the event of the horse being carried away by the current. "Slip slowly from the saddle and grab the tail," were the orders. Jack added an injunction to tie hats on carefully lest a big wave sweep them away. Specially early were we up and packed in order to take the great river at its lowest. Our camp was a little below the junction of

the North and Middle Forks of the Saskatchewan, the latter draining Howse Pass and the Lyell glacier and snowfield, the former carrying the drainage from the south and east slopes of the great Columbia Ice Field, over two hundred square miles of solid ice, most of it six or eight thousand feet above sea level.

We were all ready for the start. Jack, who had spent the evening before carving a huge wooden sword, now flung himself on his horse, and, whirling his sword in a series of swift moulinets, he gave the order:

"First Saskatchewan Militia Cavalry: Walk your horses. Forward, Mar-r-ch!"

We fell in line, stumbled safely across the three mouths of the rushing Ojinjah with its rolling rock bottom, marched up the Middle Fork in order to be above the confluence, for nothing could pass the joint volume, and plunged in. All went well, barring a miscellaneous collection of wet legs, for the water rose nearly to the saddle seats. A bar had formed in the angle of the two rivers and our horses scrambled out on that. Some of them, fortunately those ridden by the ladies, crossed it. The weight of these first horses disturbed the treacherous foundations of the bar. Down went the remaining horses in quicksand. I stepped from the saddle as the horse sank under me, and luckily the sand was not 'quick' to the weight of a man. We got the floundering animals out without the loss of a horse. The North Fork was equally deep and much swifter, the ford being complicated by the almost perpendicular bank up which the horses had to climb out of the water. Fortunately not a single one fell back with pack or rider, and we breathed a sigh of deep relief.

We were on a lovely camp ground, a little bluff above the river, a favorite with the Indians for ages. Wonderful mountains were all about us. Across the main river Murchison rose magnificently, his timbered sides scarred with avalanche paths and the timber line as clearly marked as though run by a level. There towered Mount Forbes and his lesser namesake, and Sarbach avalanching like near artillery: in the distance, Lyell the majestic. We had now burned our bridges behind us. That night the river rose eighteen inches: it was "forward" or swim back. In this beautiful camp we were to rest for a day. The horses should have one day's rest in seven. This is a practically unbroken rule, and is based solely on necessity, for guides and horse wranglers are not the most punctilious of sabbatarians. Horns of elk, goat, sheep, deer and buffalo strewed the ground, mementos of many an Indian feast. I built an arbor of elk antlers over our little tent. Delicious strawberries grew everywhere. Back from the open point was a fine forest of all kinds of conifers, even the trailing junipers whose initial syllable has given us the colloquial Jew-tree. Bushes of the *linum* (Labrador tea), with red and yellow berries, gave color to the place; and, to our surprise, there was even occasional sage brush. We prowled the forest carefree, for on a point between two rivers you can't get lost. For meals the men tossed flapjacks, a double marvel: how could they deftly throw them in the air and catch them to a perfect fit reversed in the frying pan; and how could they be so good? Flapjacks and maple syrup! And yet people *will* go to the lobster palaces.

In our strolls through the forest we came upon one

of Jim Simpson's trapping cabins. Jim is one of the great figures of the region, guide, outfitter, hunter, trapper, and one of the greatest of big game photographers. His cabin had been broken into and damage had been done, an unusual thing in the woods. Of this we were informed by a placard on the door. It was scratched deep with indelible pencil on a smooth-hewn slab nailed to the door. It read:

"These few lines are dedicated to the low-lived sucker who is in the habit of breaking in here.

If you look for excitement, be ye here
When the owner hereof is standing near.
Proceed at the game of breaking in;
But mutter farewell to all your kin.

You son of a gun (?), you've not the nerve
To let the owner of this observe
The way in which the deed is done;
Or, J——C——, we'd have some fun."

And Jim meant every word of it.

The neighborhood of this camp was a veritable happy hunting ground. Signs of many species of big game were numerous, and the trees were decorated with the sun-dens of the Douglas squirrel, built sometimes of a long-bladed grass of silky softness, sometimes of moss. One inventive genius had constructed about two feet above his den a grassy umbrella to shed the rain. Small wonder the Indians loved that camp ground.

Our route from Elkhorn Camp lay along high rocky bluffs bordering the North Fork, but soon dropped to the river flats. The river was milky with glacial

silt and was fortunately broken up into many channels threading extensive bars. We rode across these endless flats under the looming majesty of Turret and Terrace, with Murchison towering in the rear, cloud-draped, like a pursuing specter, so vast that we could not seem to leave him behind. When we were compelled to take to the river bank we besieged a fortress of vegetation, willow, alder, spruce. Some of the bars had become permanent extensions of the shore line, 'the makings' of future alluvial meadows; some had become wooded islands. The process of formation of these permanent flats and islands was evident: first come the willows lacing the sand together with a million thread-like roots; then, on the willow root foundation, the spruce. The flies on these open bars buzzed and bit in legions, every devilish biting kind of them, from bull-dogs to tiny gnats. We broke branches to fan ourselves withal; in dense brush the living boughs do that for you. Wonderful scenes unfolded before us as we trailed along these unsubstantial bars, now overflowed, now overgrown with dryas rings, pinguiculas, delicate wild roses and epilobium. Mount Coleman became a figure in the landscape, and the mountains around Pinto, Nigel and Wilcox Passes were all visible at once, stern guardians of ice and snow and black rock. Turret rose on our left in majestic nearness looking like the Coliseum and in front of it stood a Buddhist pagoda of ancient Javanese architecture. Saskatchewan rose in near perspective with its steep-pitched roof of snow, from which leaped a mighty pillar of rock like some Pharos of old guarding a dangerous coast. Jack, always 'joshing,' said it was a monument to a prehistoric

guide who was killed there when his mammoth threw him.

"Can you see any inscription, Jack?"

"Yes," he flashed back, "but it's in a dead language and I can't translate it."

The horses, driven mad by the flies, became unruly, and Moses led the band astray by taking to the water and swimming a deep channel, followed by two or three others. Then these sinners crawled out on a bar and stood there in motionless dejection. Reg's overtried patience gave way, and he expressed his opinion of Moses and all his forebears in a series of unique coruscating epithets, of which the only transcribable ones were, "You slab of 'ell!" and "You —— prehistoric Jew!" We were forced to make Flood Camp on a pebble flat, and the feminine contingent was soon busy drying out flour, cornstarch and other supplies outspread on the bar in the sunshine, while the men hung soggy blankets to the breeze. Luckily the weather held clear. We dared not hobble the horses at this camp, and of course the devils were hard to catch next morning fraying a few additional strands from the already ragged tempers of all concerned. There came ford after ford, then high trail in fire-killed timber. The decaying bark had peeled from the trunks, leaving a forest of bare telegraph poles all of rich mahogany finish. Forced back to the Saskatchewan, we faced more deep fording, in terrible current sweeping some of the more heavily-packed horses down stream, and soaking the legs of the riders. Not a horse was lost, however. They scrambled to footing some way and rejoined the pack. Tremendous precipices walled us in on the right, and Tur-

ret and Terrace, now our rear-guards, loomed weird and unworldly in the ghostly light of a gathering storm. Just then, when every man, woman and cayuse was worn to a frazzle, physically and temperamentally, appeared a little grassy break in the stern overhanging wall, and with one accord the pack turned toward it. From under the cliff gushed a crystal spring, cold and bubbling. One of the memories of that expedition is Camp Pellucid, where the weary looked forth from comfortable tents upon pebble bars aflame with epilobium and where the forest floor was gemmed with the white, waxy, exquisitely fragrant stars of the *moneses uniflora*, their petals of the texture of the camellia's. What cared we for the rain? We were snug and ship-shape when the storm broke.

The valley narrowed then to a gorge which we threaded, fording and refording the rushing stream. It was evident that we must leave the river and climb the vertical side wall of all creation to do it. One last time we forded and scrambled out on a twelve-hundred foot zigzag climb in heavy timber. At the first stop for breath we looked back. A side valley opened up across the river, and at its head was a huge glacier, its icy serpentine stream descending from a vast plateau of ice that seemed to merge with the sky. Panting and straining we topped that formidable slope and came out upon the canyon's brink. An abyss fell away before our feet, and on the opposite side rose a mountain of solid rock with hemispherical dome, absolutely unbroken, without a particle of ice or snow and with patches of dense timber. From a fissure in the side of the dome poured a great cataract capable of turning the mills of a nation, the ultimate

source of the North Fork of the Saskatchewan, for the contribution of the branch of the glacier up the valley to the left was trifling. It was the wonderful Panther Fall. From our vantage point there appeared no possible channel down which that flood could flow to its plunge. There was certainly no ice or snow on the dome above to feed it. So, though we were unable to conquer its inaccessibility and examine it closely, the inference seems at least possible that this great cataract is led down from one of the tongues of the North Saskatchewan Glacier by a channel subterranean or most narrowly canyoned, and gushes from the bowels of the mountain by an actual fissure. We crossed the crest of the great hill we had climbed, outflanked the domed mountain and descended a gentle slope of Douglas fir with reddish brown columnar trunks and emerged upon a grassy park for a luxurious two-day rest camp. A shoulder of Athabaska rose above us. I thought carefully over the topography of the country we had traversed, and sought out Robinson Crusoe.

"Robinson, I believe if we climb that shoulder of Athabaska we can look down on the big glacier, a tongue of which we saw this morning."

"I half believe you're right," was the reply.

Up we started. It was a stiff pull, but not difficult. As we gained elevation, the flowers of the upper world bloomed bright around us: acres of silene, incomparable little beauty of the heights, lovely blue forget-me-nots, and the delicate white forget-me-nots of the romanzoffia, the many-tinted latyrus, purple stemmed sedum, pulsatilla, and gaudy orange-and-crimson hierachium—flowers, flowers, flowers, wherever the slope



Photo by F. B. Converse.

Marching in the Bed of the Saskatchewan. (See p. 197.)



North Saskatchewan Glacier and Edge of Columbia Ice Field. (See p. 201.)

was not utterly rocky and barren; and an abundance of caribou moss. In the rocks were surprising fossils, relics of the ages when these great mountains were layers of marine mud, corals and the most tantalizingly perfect oysters. Wilcox and Nigel passes were both in plain view. The rock tints gave a rare color scheme; gray and marl-green on Wilcox, red-brown on Nigel, over against the purple background of a fierce storm. Eight thousand feet—and still the ubiquitous “skeeter” in clouds: ten thousand, and their courage failed them. Now we reached the crest of the great buttress ridge and looked over. Our ‘hunch’ had been correct. We were looking down upon the great North Saskatchewan Glacier at our very feet. We made the first photographs of it. It is a perfect (though dead) glacier with triple moraine systems fully developed—terminal, lateral and medial. The prospect was astounding. Ice, ice, ice, as far as the eye could reach. Great peaks rose all about us, seamed with glaciers, crowned with eternal snows. And at the glacier’s head a vast ice cap covering the landscape to the southwest, reaching away into the unseen distance, the Columbia Ice Field. It is at times such as this that one realizes to the full the privilege of living.

Wilcox Pass, the scenic center of the Northwest, gave us a great disappointment. Under cloud and rain and pelting sleet we mounted the wonderful pass; and as the clouds momentarily thinned and lifted, only to settle densely back, we caught glimpses of unparalleled magnificence. Towering peaks of the grandest dimensions, from which streamed glacier after glacier, were all about us. We could see their looming shadowy forms, but detail was denied us. It was mad-

dening; and by unanimous vote of the suffragettes that bivouac figures in history as Camp Dam-weather. Alas, that our first glimpse of the Arctic watershed should be seen "as through a glass, darkly." At one point in the pass, on a water-soaked, flower-illuminated meadow, my horse stood with his forefeet in one tiny spring, his hind feet in another. One was the head of the fierce Sun Wapta, whose current would ultimately pour through the Athabaska and Mackenzie into the Arctic Ocean; the other would reach Hudson's Bay and the Atlantic Ocean through the Saskatchewan and Nelson.

When we reached the main camp after our detour to the Wilcox, Reg. was busy concocting a savory meal. "What's for supper, Reg?" hungrily investigating with two pairs of nerves, optic and olfactory.

"Saskatchewan custard."

"Where 'd you get the eggs?"

"Found an owl's nest."

"Boiled windpipes" was another dainty announced by our chef, which proved to be macaroni and cheese. The wilderness and the solitary place truly develop a vocabulary all their own.

Nigel Pass is the abomination of desolation, an utterly barren traverse in which we scrambled over and among bare red rocks of assorted sizes heaped in mad confusion. Mount Nigel was conspicuous on the left, but the great peaks grouped about Wilcox Pass were still clouded. A difficult waterless trek brought us out on the headwaters of the Brazeau (Ojahdi Tunga Wapta, Big River with Many Branches). It flowed in tortuous channel through a flowery meadow, and teemed with enormous trout. As we looked back

at this rugged pass we could see game trails criss-crossing in every direction and in the most impossible places. Along them in perfect poise and nonchalance trailed band after band of mountain sheep, magnificent rams with boldly curling horns, graceful ewes and lambs of all sizes. The great rams seemed rather to glide than walk; always that tremendous head must be kept in perfect poise. The hair-raising places they got into and safely out of challenged belief. Jack Greaves, like Alice, refused to believe the evidence of his eyes: "It ain't so; I'm batty," he declared, "when I see a whole zoo scornin' the law o' gravity an' walkin' on the ceilin', I've *got 'em*." We counted exactly forty of these noble sheep in a single morning.

We were now in a different type of country, long open valleys flanked by superb ranges of mountains, splendidly glaciated. Fir and spruce and jack-pine were replaced here by the beautiful mountain pine (*pinus monticola*) in open groves. Our fine camp site was also a favorite of the Indians; and their stacked tipi poles and their wickiup frames dotted the meadows by the Brazeau. We were now at the foot of the long incline leading up to Jonas Pass, and Sid, with a great big Idea in his head, started to explore into the unknown. Our immediate objective was Maligne Lake, lost for two generations and rediscovered by that altogether charming geographer and explorer, Mrs. Mary Schäffer Warren, whose explorations were made under the guidance of William Warren, now her husband, and of our own Sid. The route then followed was down the Brazeau and over Pobokton Pass to Pobokton Valley. Sid believed that horses could be taken over the Jonas Shoulder, a great ridge over

9500 feet in altitude dividing the valley north of the Jonas Pass from Pobokton Valley, thus gaining entrance to the latter at a saving of three days' time. The afternoon wore on. We put in the time photographing the mountains, Nigel and its evil namesake, the pass, Cataract Pass, across the Brazeau, and some low bare rocky ranges populous with sheep. Darkness came apace; still no Sid. When black night reigned we kindled a huge beacon fire that lit up the mountains for miles and reflected dull red from the low-lying clouds. That glare might have guided a straying wanderer from almost any distance. Sid came in at midnight, announcing that we would try the short cut. Up the Jonas Pass from Camp Exploration toiled the pack, seven flowery miles, seventy-eight hundred feet. This is one of the most beautiful passes in all the Rockies, wide and easy of slope, colorful with peacock-blue gentian and with bright magenta epilobium, dotted with many lakes of different colored waters, and walled to the left with a magnificent range of sharp pyramidal peaks more marvelously glaciated than any range we had seen. To the right a partially snow-covered ridge was our problem, and above it was to be seen a vast mass of snow like a gigantic barn roof, its comb outlined in a perfect horizontal line against the sky. It was Mount Pobokton. Up to the crest of the Jonas shoulder the brave little cayuses puffed and plodded, the first of their kind to do the trick. Then along the skyline we rode to where a safe descent offered. Ahead were some of the giants beyond the Athabaska, black wall after black wall, shining glaciers and snow fields; and in the far distance a single black canine tooth, sharp and forbidding, the

peak of olden time imaginary immensity, Mount Hooker.

Pobokton is the Stony Indian word for 'owl'; and the name was bestowed by this race of romantic nomenclature from the constant shriek of great gales up the valley, the sound of the wind suggesting the mournful hooting of a horned owl. As Jack phrased it, in perfect innocence of punning, "The wind 'e 'owls 'ere continuous." Our march down the Pobokton Valley led us ultimately among burned and down timber, difficult to traverse, and we were obliged to make Deadwood Camp in a bit of discomfort, except that we could luxuriate in splendid camp fires which add so much to night life in the open. We burned a vast amount of superfluous scenery at the camp, and listened by the leaping blaze to tales of hunting and of Indian wars, until Nip declared next morning that she dreamed that she was compelled to the choice between being scalped by an Indian and being hugged by a grizzly bear.

Very different was the next camp on a beautiful flower-strewn plateau above Independence Creek, where at about nine thousand feet the yellow poppies grew in profusion along with beds of purple erigeron. From an unnamed peak near the camp a marvelous prospect was unfolded. A range of lavender-colored mountains reached toward Maligne Pass. Twenty-eight lakes were scattered at various levels, all far above timber line. These lakes were of all colors, suggesting highly mineralized water. In one of them trunks of great trees lay at the bottom. Whence came they? They evidently dated from a past geologic age, though there was no way to determine whether

they were petrified. Either they flourished before the elevation of the range or in some era antedating the ice age when mild climate, abundant moisture and as yet undenuded soil permitted the development of heavy forestation at great altitude. The view was overwhelming. To the southwest, along our back trail, Athabaska, Wilcox, the Twins, the Diadem, and all that noble group leaped skyward. Closer at hand could be studied as on a relief map the Pobokton and Jonas Valleys and the glories of the Jonas Range, with its rarely beautiful glaciers and the upper course of the Sun Wapta lined with fine peaks. To the west the conspicuous mass of Robson, hugest of the Rockies of Canada, wove its spell of allurements.

"Where have you been?" asked one of Robinson Crusoe as we grouped around the savory 'grub' on the spread pack mantle.

"I have been in Heaven," was the reverent answer—followed instantly by, "And there were three hundred thousand marmots."

"Did you count them?" inquired the literalist seriously.

"No; I had no time. I just counted their feet and divided by four."

Maligne Pass gave us another feast of beauty, for the lofty mountains walling in Maligne Lake were towering closer at hand. Our welcome to the Maligne Valley was personally offered by two immense grizzlies, one of whom sat on his haunches eyeing us with great disfavor from a distance of a couple of hundred yards, swinging his dusky head and shoulders from side to side in approved menagerie bear style, while his mate, in a lumbering lope, ran parallel to the pack train for



Resting below the Jonas Shoulder. (See p. 204.)



Maligne Lake (Chaba Imne), Mount Unwin in middle distance. (See p. 207.)

half a mile. We camped, parted from Maligne Lake only by the bordering range of which Mount Unwin (named by the Canadian Geographic Board for Sid himself in tribute to a hero) is the snow-crowned chief. We were on the very flank of the mountain. Far away up the slope, above timber line, among the lush grasses and flowers just below the bare rock that led up to the peak's crown of perpetual snow, browsed and disported the very "Goat of Monsieur Seguin," as white and as frisky as the heroine of Daudet's inimitable tale, and equally disdainful of the wolf. Enter Paul. Paul was a delight; a boy of sixteen, never in the way (unlike his kind in general) and everybody's pet. The goat set his soul afire. He earnestly besought Sid to loan him his rifle that he might slay the goat. Sid, with an abiding faith in Paul's utter inability to get within a mile of the goat, or to hit him if he did, complied. I felt like a climb, so I told Paul I would go with him and photograph and render what aid I could in the stalk. It was a charming day for a climb. I started off in a long circuit to cut off the goat's only line of retreat and to engage the caprean attention at long range by climbing in full view, while Paul, *ventre à terre* in the tall grass and flowers, wriggled directly upward. Like Sid, I gave the goat barely a thought, and I focussed my soul and the camera on the glorious vision outspread before me, the great mountains of the upper Athabaska. Among them a black pillar, towering perpendicular and snowless, challenged curiosity. I had gained a considerable height on the mountain and was about on a level with the goat which had been watching me curiously. Suddenly rang out the crack of a rifle, reëchoing through

the rarefied air. Then Paul's ecstatic yell, "I got him! I got him!" A bullet through the heart had stretched the goat as dead as a mackerel. The game laws—three or four of them—exceedingly strictly enforced in western Canada, had been "busted wide open." Now a game warden or a N. W. M. P. (Northwest Mounted Police), is liable to materialize from nothingness at any spot at any time in the Canadian wilderness—especially if he isn't wanted—and Paul's heart turned to jelly with fright. Imagine, then, the effect of a stentorian hail from across a great ravine to leeward. Paul's conscience translated the hail as, "I've got you now!" Visions of his young life wasting away in prison flitted through that handful of convoluted sweetbreads that was usually a pretty good brain, and he fled in leaps and bounds down the mountain at imminent risk to any or all the component units of his skeleton, flinging away the rifle in his foolish panic. Again the hail, and I recognized Robinson Crusoe's voice shouting mightily, but against the wind I unfortunately could not catch a word. It was most unlucky, for he was calling attention to a rare chance to photograph another large goat around a corner from me and on a ledge from which I blocked the only retreat. I at last made the terrified boy hear me, and waved him back up the mountain to where I sat by the dead goat. He reached me more dead than alive after his needless exertion and volubly bemoaning the lost rifle. "Oh," he wailed, "I lost Sid's rifle after he trusted me." I pulled him together as best I could. We galloped the goat and pulled and rolled him down the grassy slope. He was too heavy to carry to camp, so to destroy any scent that might

attract the ubiquitous bears we immersed him in an icy stream that tumbled down a little ravine. On the way down, as good luck would have it, I found the abandoned rifle uninjured, and Paul's cup of happiness slopped over into the saucer. It was now nearly dark; we left the goat in the stream to be picked up by Sid with a pack horse in the morning, and sped for camp.

There is no pass over the mountains to the lake, so we were compelled to outflank the range in abominable muskeg through which the poor cayuses plunged and wallowed. We at last came out upon the shore of this loveliest of Canadian lakes, so long lost to view, and struggled to our camp at its outlet through the vile muskeg, a feature of which was great mounds of pink cushiony moss, many of them ten feet in diameter and three or four feet deep. Maligne Lake is about twenty miles long and varies in width from about three miles to a scant hundred yards at Sampson's Narrows, about twelve miles from the foot of the lake. The most superbly beautiful mountains line its shores and send their great glaciers to bathe their feet in its blue depths. A curious feature of this great lake is that though there are millions of shrimp in it, there are no fish—one of the peculiarities of life distribution.

The lake, called by the Indians of old Chaba Imne (Beaver Lake) was well known in earlier days both to the Indians and to the H. B. C. *coureurs de bois*. The Indians deserted it for some now unknown superstitious reason, "bad medicine" having become associated with it in some mysterious way. The later white trappers, of course, knew the Maligne River

which enters the Athabaska below Jasper, but believed it had its rise in Medicine Lake through which it flows. For several miles below Medicine Lake the course of the Maligne is subterranean, and temporary obstructions in this underground channel—probably dammed logs—cause the level of Medicine Lake to vary as much as forty feet in a single day; whence the Indian name, for with them medicine and magic are synonyms. I shall attempt no description of Maligne Lake, with its wondrous mountains, its snow and ice, its ever varying and gorgeous effects of cloud and light, especially at sunrise and sunset. That has been adequately and beautifully done by its talented discoverer.¹

Our adventure of exploring it came near being our last. Those sterling guides and outfitters of Jasper, the Otto Brothers, had brought up lumber on pack horses from the Athabaska and had built a fairly strong flat-bottomed boat a short time before; and in this boat, sadly and foolhardily overladen, we embarked for the tour of the lake and the closer examination of the beautiful mountains above the narrows. You dare not do a foolish thing in the wilderness, it always boomerangs you. The day was all that could be desired, calm and brilliant, and the lake was unruffled. We christened our craft "The Saucy Skipper" and voyaged forth on the calm lake in which the mountains were mirrored in inverted beauty. Everybody was in high spirits, and Jack, an ex-sailor, made merry with reports from an imaginary crow's nest.

¹ See "Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies," by Mary S. Schäffer (now Warren). Putnams.

"Ice on the starboard bow," he called pointing to the great glacier on Unwin.

"Obstruction dead ahead, sir."

"What is it, lookout?"

"Ducks, sir," and a great flock of them noisily took wing.

"Derelict to port, sir." And it was so: the old log raft used in the very first voyage of discovery upon the lake, rigged with a mast and a pack mantle for a sail. We reached the narrows and beyond, awed by the stern glory of the great peaks that frowned down upon us. We were nearly twelve miles from camp on the return trip when black lowering clouds made us take note of the grim realities of the situation. In the middle of a great lake is no place to be caught by a severe storm in a crazily overloaded boat. The men at the oars pulled their hearts out trying to reach an island nearer than the main shore. Straight as a line across the lake we saw the swiftly approaching curling waves of a white squall. It caught us, piling in over the gunwale in business-like style. The men rowed desperately, and with equal desperation all who were not at the oars, men and women alike, baled with lunch pails, cups, hats, anything that would hold water. But the whole lake seemed pouring into the boat; and just when we could not possibly have floated five minutes longer, the boat grated on the pebbles of the island. It was a close shave; but in an hour the great lake was a mill pond again. We had learned our little lesson; and, rowing to the nearest shore, we coasted along it safely back to camp and broiled goat chops.

We left Camp Chaba Imne in driving rain and

made an easy march to Flying Goose Camp, just below the crest of Bighorn (Shovel) Pass, 8,350 feet. Our camp was in a charming bit of open park land, in full view of the curious Flying Goose Glacier which takes the exact form of a wild goose with wings outspread and neck extended, seemingly ever flying, flying, flying away from the great mountain it so strangely adorns; yet the mighty wings are of no avail, and the Flying Goose will fly thus throughout the ages.

Shovel Pass was wonderfully decorated on its southern approach with lupine, purple aconite, silene and a peculiarly rich hierachium of orange-brown and crimson; but as our cayuses topped the last ridge for the descent all vegetation failed and the pass on the Athabaska side became a desert of rock and drifted snow. But for this we cared not. The great mountains along the Athabaska and the Whirlpool rose grandly to right and to left: Hardesty, Pyramid Mountain, not the Pyramid Peak earlier mentioned, the snow-spotted Fiddlebacks, the barren slabs of the Colin Range, and facing us, in the virginal purity of everlasting snow, was uplifted the great peak since named for that virginal martyr, Edith Cavell.

Our expedition, with its hardships and happiness, was over. It had been a hard pull in spots, but a delight always. We were, however, pretty well worn to frazzles of apparel. The soles of both my boots were held on by wire wrapped around my foot.

We camped for the last time of that memorable trip at Buffalo Prairie, a wide flat along the Athabaska, noted for its wonderful pasturage, its fine trout stream, and its great boulders of conglomerate—



A Descent over Snow. (See p. 253.)



In Shovel Pass. (See p. 212.)

geological croquettes, somebody called them—deposited by some retreating glacier of ages past.

The next evening our loud hail brought a boat over from Jasper, at that day in the stage of a frontier settlement of tents, and appropriately called "Ragtown." Jasper was then playing true to the type of such settlements—sleep diversified with rum.

"God made the mountains," said Robinson Crusoe sententiously, surveying Ragtown for the first time, "man made the cities; and the Devil made the little towns."

CHAPTER IX

THE SOURCES OF THE ATHABASKA

Hiring cooks in the Rockies. Crossing the Athabaska. Bob. Order of march. Wonderful views. The Galleon. The Sun Wapta. Battle Ax. Up the Chaba. Fortress Lake. The deer. Retreat. Athabaska Falls. Wild Rose Camp. Goats again. Bread in the Wilderness. Cold rain. Strawberry shortcake. To Mount Columbia. Tober's fording. Black Friar and White Sister. The flying camp. The Athabaska's sources. The glacier falls.

THE source of a great river has ever held a special lure for me. The tiny spring seeping from the ground, the turbid torrent gushing from a glacier grotto, destined to become a mighty river watering the lands and carrying commerce for the nations, hold the same fascination that the biographer finds in the infancy, childhood and development of the great characters of history. Somewhere among the glittering peaks we had viewed from the "high places" the year before lurked the four sources of the Athabaska. At one of them we had stood, that tiny spring in Wilcox Pass. The others we would seek.

We established a month's breaking-in camp on a lovely island in Pyramid Lake, near Jasper, whence we could start forth with the tenderfeet to tramp the regions round about from Maligne Lake to the Yellow Head Pass. We had sent away down the line of the C. P. R. for faithful X. as camp manager in

a region where faithful retainers are few. Our discovery of X. was on this wise. Some seasons past, when we built our altars to the Red Gods by lovely Emerald Lake, camp cooks were scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth. One simply *had* to be found, or camp was impossible. Robinson Crusoe had heard rumor of one who dwelt in a certain town toward the sunset from Field. With blood in his eye he fared forth to follow up the rumor. Now this town was not difficult to canvas, if you knew how. Robinson knew. He hied him promptly to the information exchange, the most prosperous looking among the numerous hooch palaces which the town cherished. Robinson made haste to state his errand.

"Do we know X.?" said all and several. "We'll say we do;" and they proceeded to describe poor X. as a worthless, irresponsible drunkard with whom no straight dealing was possible.

"But can he cook?" insisted Robinson with singleness of purpose.

"Yes, he's a fine cook when he's sober; but he's never sober. You can't do nothin' with *him*."

"Do you know anyone else I can get?" persisted Robinson.

"There ain't nobody else from Calgary to Revelstoke."

Disheartening! Finally Robinson located his "prospect" hopelessly drunk. The press of circumstances was compelling. Direct action seemed to be the demand of the hour. Robinson lured and led and dragged the wretched X. to the railway, pitched him bodily into an open box-car in a state of collapse, shanghaied him to Field and had him carted like a sack of grain to

Emerald Lake. There in a tent he put his victim to bed, dead to the world. In the morning X. awoke with a frightful hangover, a throbbing head and a whole palette of tastes, among which dark brown predominated. Robinson greeted him with coffee and kindness in lieu of cursing. It was a new experience for the derelict. He gave his word and he kept it. He became the mainstay of our base camp. Outgoing parties would leave camp for days at a time, with X. as sole custodian of the outfit, money and valuables. Robinson had made a man of him; and every subsequent season he was with us, trusted to the utmost. That trust was never betrayed.

Pyramid Lake abounded in huge trout, and X. was an artist with them. Nip was equally artistic in catching them. They were furnished to order. X. would say:

"Madame, please go and catch three four-pounders for supper;" and in half an hour they would be under his knife. A month of this passed. All were fit and fine, eager for the trail and the plunge into what was literally the unknown.

The maze of great mountains that cluster at the three southwestern sources of the Athabaska is a real *terra incognita*. Many years ago Habel penetrated the region in an adventurous journey; but he has given us no adequate record, cartographic, photographic or descriptive. Coleman's whole attention centered on Mount Columbia. Mrs. Warren's expedition of 1908 reached the fringe of this beautiful country; but in her charming book the emphasis is naturally thrown upon her chief achievement of that season, her re-discovery of Maligne Lake. The region, then, of

the Athabaska sources was practically untouched, unsurveyed and unmapped. The approximations to maps then obtainable were based on inference or on pure hypothesis—which is the dignified and scientific synonym for guesswork. The best of them were from twenty to fifty miles in error. Thus the call of this unthreaded maze drew us toward this gloriously beautiful region, which for splendid peaks and for superb ice and snow has few rivals throughout the length and breadth of the Canadian Rockies.

The August sun beat down dazzlingly as we gathered about the great heaps of food and the small heaps of baggage that were being rapidly invoiced and tossed on the wagon the day of our start from Jasper. "Sunny Alberta" is a Canadian conjure-word; but apply it with reservations. To-day it held true: the heat waves flickered above the burning earth in fashion to rival Arizona's best efforts, and you couldn't believe that what you saw far away in that hazy violet distance was really snow and blue rivers of everlasting ice. The last caddy of tea, the last bag of flour was stowed, and a-top of the whole load Robinson Crusoe and I stowed Nip—her distinctive right as the only woman in this expedition.

"Loll, loaf and be merry, Nip," mocked Robinson Crusoe, "for to-morrow you—ride!" And off trundled the groaning, swaying load to the bank of the awful, raging flood the geographies call Athabaska, which is Cree for "Big River of the Woods."

The swollen Athabaska was turbid with glacial silt, and we had to cross it in a most unsubstantial-looking punt. It was an uncomfortable crossing in an overloaded boat. Nip held my hand very tightly and shut

her eyes. She says she never once thought of the great truth that she was my *equal* and that her vote counted as much as mine. She had firmly made up her mind to be drowned, and I think she was really disappointed when she landed safely. Forty feet of perpendicular bluff overlooked the river here, and Nip scrambled up as fast as toes and knees and hands could carry her. She wanted to get away from that river.

We could now pull ourselves together and look about us. We were on an ancient river bench dating from the dying ice age, when the Athabaska must have had about the volume of the Amazon. Picture it in those days of old, swirling and roaring along, sweeping great icebergs toward the Arctic Ocean—there are more reasons than one for joy in living now rather than then. These old benches, water-washed, broken down and rounded, could be traced plainly on both sides of the river. Back of them, on the farther side, rose the purple and rusty red strata of Pyramid Mountain with the Fiddlebacks to flank and rear, and down river on our own bank the vertical slate slabs of the Colin Range glistened smooth as window panes, gray and dead as ashes. The needle peaks pricked the sky desolate in their barrenness and the despair of the rock-climber. Far on the up-river horizon lay the glorious unknown of snow and ice, our destination.

Nip's diary bears entry for this day: "I could almost feel the thrill of the explorer. It is a real honor to be the first woman in an unknown land—as Eve said in the Garden. It is less honorable to be the second, but more reassuring. For one can comfortably reflect that whence the first woman returned safe as to neck and limb, thither the second may penetrate

with something more than an even chance. And the second is deriving much satisfaction from the thought. With my trail experience I've no right to feel leery of this. I suppose it's only the sound of the word Athabaska."

The crossing of the angry river with all equipment and food occupied practically the whole day. The camp that first evening was pitched in an open forest of grand old pines near a lovely little lake in which a brood of wild ducks swam and in which the pure snows of Mount Edith Cavell were gloriously reflected. We sorted out our own precious personal belongings from the heterogeneous pile of 'duffle' and the little tented city of the trail rose as if by magic. The sun sank behind the high mountains and already a brilliant planet hung like an arc light in the golden west. A demoniac yell rent the still air, the twenty horses of the outfit, confined in a corral, took fright and kicked and squealed lustily. Again the devilish howl. This time it could be located as coming from the cook fire. It also resolved itself into syllables that conveyed meaning:

"Gru-u-ub pi-i-i-ile!"

It was Bob's delicately refined invitation to sup. Bob was the cook, fairly redolent of the underworld of London. Nip asked Jack Adamson, the horse wrangler, how they had discovered the unique thing.

"Well, Ma'am," he replied, "I got 'im for the outfit in Edmonton. I looked at 'is' ands, and they were clean. I asked 'im if 'e were religious, and 'e said, 'No.' Then I engaged 'im." He proceeded to explain more fully:

"You see, Ma'am, the cook the outfit 'ad last year

was so religious that if 'e woke up in the night 'e sung a hymn to put 'im to sleep again; w'ich didn't 'ave no such effect on the rest of us."

But the creature could cook—when he wanted to. The menu of that first supper still clings in my memory: delicious bacon, creamed onions, boiled potatoes, macaroni and cheese, prunes, bread and butter, jam, tea. And they call this "the privations of the wilderness!" Privation and hardship on the trail are occasionally the result of unavoidable accident, far oftener of lack of foresight.

Tents were struck bright and early, and the packing complete. The diamond hitches were thrown, the cinches "wound up" and tested. Bruce Otto, the head guide, called "Come on, Jimmie," to the lead pack horse; and as the splendidly trained animal followed his master like a dog, his own followers fell into line behind him, from Battle Axe, bearer of the kitchen paraphernalia and wearing the dishpan tied jauntily a-tilt above his pack as Tommy Atkins wears his pill-box cap, all the way down the line to little wild-eyed Stubby. We were on the move; everybody was happy, even to Biscuit barking joyously in the van. Biscuit is an Airedale lady of good family, and her calling in life is the pursuit of the grizzly bear. Her temper, consequently, is decidedly savage until she is properly introduced and feels well acquainted with you. Then she is a devoted vassal. Biscuit adopted Nip and me, and elected herself guardian of our tent with the privilege of sleeping at—and sometimes on—our feet.

The cold of the night vanished. The sun beat down ardently and the snow on the "Delectable Mountains" ahead of us glittered in its rays. The trail wound

through the forest, past beautiful lakes with water now brown, now peacock blue; and the horses soon fell into the regular plodding walk which they must keep steadily—exigencies of trail permitting—from five to seven hours daily, depending on the distance to the next good pasturage. A pack train is always picturesque, no matter how familiar the sight may be. The big awkward packs sway with the step of the cayuses in ludicrously elephantine fashion. Nip said she felt like the spangled lady in a circus parade riding just back of the elephants, Bruce's red shirt and Jack's green one helping the illusion with colorful touches. There was circus-day heat, too, and a mix-up of frantic thirsty horses occurred at every watercourse. We were more than glad when Bruce ordered camp in a beautiful park-like meadow beside a roaring rapid of the Athabaska. A wonderfully beautiful spring, clear, and copious, gushed forth near the muddy river, and in a great pool of the bright water huge trout swam lazily to and fro. The whole park was ruby-crusted with the most luscious strawberries of surprising size. Trout and strawberries—what a gastronomic combination!

Morning dawned to a pelting rain. Breakfast was served in one of the large tents and we sat around on the pack mantles hungrily disposing of it. Bruce, coatless and dripping, came to the entrance of the tent, filled his plate and cup, and stood outside in the storm contentedly eating rapidly diluting oatmeal. We called him to come in, but his reply was: "I'm all right. I'm no friend of a tent; the open trees are good enough for me." What iron men the wilderness breeds! The trail from Strawberry Camp arched

high over the flanks of Hardesty. Rain and sleet pelted pitilessly, and the young jack-pines, second growth after fire, crowded close and swept us from head to foot with their wet fronds. Without our rubber fishing shirts we should have been mere saturated sponges. Berries of all kinds grew in profusion along the trail: strawberries, red raspberries, big as thimbles; clusters of rich ripe currants, blueberries, gooseberries, saskatoons. We riders stopped to feast, but Bruce and the pack pressed relentlessly on. For us laggards the march then became a task of tracking. The one criticism that can lie against Bruce Otto as a guide is that his sole interest apparently lay in the pack and its condition. The riders could look out for themselves. Lucky we were seasoned and that there were no accidents. No guide should ever march his pack ahead of his party. The order should properly be guide, party, pack, with the cook and horse wrangler bringing up the rear. But there is no question that his horses magnificently repaid his care. Never have I seen so fine and so intelligent a 'bunch.' Some of them were uncannily trail-wise. Dude, for instance, when you left him standing with bridle rein over his head, would march off "left oblique," side-stepping the reins with consummate skill; Monte, a noble iron gray, simply reached down, gathered up his bridle rein in his teeth, and trotted off laughing at you.

When the trail dropped again to the river level we hit bad muskeg. My horse fell with me three times, but managed to struggle and plunge out of the engulfing bog. Each time I was compelled to leap free of the saddle and land on my feet to avoid being rolled on. That was too much for Nip. She has an

abject fear of muskeg, but would rather sink in more or less gracefully by herself than be thrown in by a horse. So off she slid and by a judicious selection of tussocks and roots she managed to lead her sturdy little mare safely through to camp. It was located on a narrow flat beside the river which hissed along venomously past our tent. But the bank was not high enough to be undermined and the cold relieved us from fear of a rise, so we were soon lounging *sans-souci* on a great pile of boughs in the tent while a bright fire blazed and crackled before the entrance, warming the interior as nothing else can.

Nip's diary gives a sketch of trail life that no mere man is capable of recording. I quote: "I am the only woman in the party, and I am useful—well-nigh indispensable. 'Dynamite' (he's in the powder business) wants a button sewed on. Bruce's trousers need repair, but he's too bashful to give them to me. He'll be more bashful if he doesn't. Later—he did." Trail life is like all the rest of it, "just one d——thing after another."

The cloud effects on the mountains here were marvelous. Cavell became a monstrous volcano whose cloud-banner streamed from its mighty crown, white and steam-like, against a maelstrom of black and purple clouds billowing like a troubled sea and pierced occasionally by a ray of chill wintry sunlight. Almost opposite our camp the Whirlpool River came dashing down into the Athabaska in a series of wild whitewater plunges over ledge after ledge from Athabaska Pass and the Committee's Punch Bowl, famous in the long ago as the scene of the annual council of the Indians with the officials of the great

fur company, who traveled the long Athabaska Trail for trade and pow-wow and revelry. Just above our camp across the river towered an extraordinary triple peak. It was like a treasure ship of old Spain: two wonderful spurs gave the effect of the high bow and stern of the ancient caravels, while an inaccessible perpendicular black pillar midway between the spurs represented the slender mast. It was the most unusual mountain I have ever seen, and I identified it instantly as the great black pillar I had seen in the distance the year before from the high slopes of Unwin. We named it "The Galleon."

Three days more we marched in the all-enveloping curtain of cloud and mist. The grand mountains were entirely obliterated, and we were compelled to solace our æsthetic sense with nearer and lesser beauties; flowers, cascades, and the varied minor phases of landscape. Close by one of our almost deliquescent camps was the most remarkable natural goat lick I have ever seen. The beautiful snowy creatures trooped down from the heights of Hardesty at evening and early morning, literally by dozens, to feast on an argillaceous mineral deposit contained in an almost perpendicular bluff which fell away to the river and had been bared by a landslide. The underbrush through which they had passed was tufted with flocks of shed hair. Happily and carelessly they paraded across the face of this nearly vertical wall like flies on a window pane. They seemed to be passionately fond of this substance; and the bluff was pitted with little recesses and caverns in the bank, in which they could curl up and nibble away at the roof of their strange burrow. Whether it was the flavor or the

effect that attracted them, no one could tell. That it had a medicinal or mechanical effect upon their digestive organs was certain; for it passed through them in the form of white clay casts, all regular tetrahedra with rounded angles and apices. Nothing could frighten them away, and they came down through groups of us gathered to watch them. And what delicious chops a yearling carries about with him on his active frame!

We plunged, floundered and swam next through a choice assortment of deep waterholes, beastly muskeg and dangerous quicksands, some of which we corduroyed when we spotted them before they spotted us. We ultimately reached Ranger Creek, a beautiful stream tumbling from the high snows of the Endless Chain, a monotonously regular sierra which culminates in the Hardesty *massif*. Splashing through it, we came upon a succession of beautiful terraced benches, lightly timbered and luxuriant with strawberries. This was our last camp before the first of the two dreaded fords which we had to make and which had been our ever-present bugaboo since we had set out: the Sun Wapta of evil fame and the great flood rushing down from the snows of Columbia and known to the trapper as the West Branch (*i.e.*, west of the Sun Wapta), though actually the farthest south of all the sources of the Athabaska. The remaining pair of Athabaska sources had thus far been unvisited, but it was known that they give birth to the two forks of the Chaba, as the Athabaska is called above its junction with the Mount Columbia (west) branch. Of all these component elements of the great river, the Sun Wapta is the most difficult and dangerous both

to skirt and to cross, owing to its abominable muskegs, to the tremendous force of its current and to the rolling boulders with which its bed is strewn. The Indians named it Sun Wapta in a legend of its terrors. A young brave, they tell, drew his bow at a flying eagle, and the arrow struck home. The eagle fell dying across the river from the brave youth. With the applauding shouts of his people ringing in his ears, and under the tender eyes of his inamorata, he plunged boldly into the treacherous stream to retrieve the splendid bird whose quill feathers should make for him the headdress of honor. The wild flood swept him away, nor was he ever seen again. And to this day the awesome glacial torrent is Sun Wapta, the River of the Whirlpools. Over this terror of a stream, just at its junction with the main Athabaska, we found, to our surprise and relief, a fair ford with pretty good footing instead of the dreaded rolling rocks.

Bruce had said on starting out: "There's a pretty good trail for a couple of days. Then it runs up a tree."

This it proceeded to do immediately after crossing the Sun Wapta. We marched up the main river over quivery flats of gray sticky mud which shook like gelatine as the horses stepped on it; and if one stood still, the sinking process began at once. Then, side-hill gouging up a nearly vertical bluff of soft alluvium, we struck in among young jack-pines about fifteen feet tall and growing as dense as cattails in a marsh. We had literally to cut our way through. From these annoying jack-pine thickets we emerged upon the river bank again, where queer atoll-like bands of that same

quivering paste separated bottomless muskeg lakes from the swirling current, which, by its very pressure, seemed to have packed the curving rims of these muskeg areas to a semi-solid footing from two to five feet wide. The steep shore was an inextricable tangle of down timber, and we were compelled to march along these unsubstantial atoll rims. It was rather a hair-raising experience. Once poor little Stubby fell off into the river with his heavy pack. Jack, riding Monte, a splendid water horse, plunged in after him; and both animals, by hard swimming and to a lurid linguistic accompaniment, succeeded in struggling to safety. Jack claims to be a good churchman, but his vocabulary that day was, to say the least, undenominational.

Came now, by way of variety, a stretch of burned timber with a fringe of living trees, as usual, bordering the river. These dreadful forest fires always spare timber bordering on water. The leaping flames create a strong draft and the air rushes in from the surface of lake or river, literally blowing the fire back from the shore. In this area the fallen, charred trunks lay heaped in wildest confusion. Few trained hunters are better at the exciting game of leaping hurdles than these mountain-bred cayuses. Barring slow progress, such riding is exhilarating sport. But over all this tangle Robinson Crusoe persistently scrambled afoot and led his horse. Robinson loves horses from the depths of his tender, old bachelor heart, and he mollycoddles them outrageously. I am fairly convinced that he would not 'swap' a pinto cayuse for a model *Haus-frau*. Walk he would, despite our urgings to spare himself.

"My cayuse," he rejoined, "is a ferry boat, not a timber cruiser."

Along these open stretches of river bank the sand was tracked by deer and goat, by coyote and lynx. And in these tracks could be read as in an open book the story of sneaks and surprises, of rushes and escapes, and sometimes of kills.

In this abhorrent stretch of country Battle Axe came to grief and played quitter. At the foot of an exceedingly steep descent was a stream choked with fallen logs and deep with backwater. There was poor take-off for a leap and worse landing. We crawled across on monkey bridges of wet logs, each on the log of his choice as being esteemed the least slippery. The cayuses jumped the channel or floundered through according to taste. It was necessary, on making the leap, to turn sharply to the right and skirt a deep pool of half liquid muskeg. Here Battle Axe slipped and fell in, sinking in the ooze till head and neck alone were visible. He lay limp, refusing to struggle or aid the rescuers in any way. He was thumped, kicked and cursed. Somebody groped around in the mud and found his tail and twisted it. Then a rope was looped around his neck and to the pommel of Bruce's saddle, and the powerful animal he rode nearly pulled his victim's head off; but all to no avail. This method meant a dead horse, if carried too far, and the rope was loosened just in time. Bruce then held the poor cayuse's nose under water. It was apparently sheer cruelty; but in reality a last desperate resort, for a drowning horse will always struggle. Battle Axe, under the tugging of all hands, and inspired by fear, asphyxiation and earnest expostulation, gave a

mighty plunge and came forth in a plaster cast of muskeg mud.

"You see," explained Bruce, "he couldn't hear me cussin' him for the cameras clickin'."

That night we camped on a wet sponge, evidently a favorite resort of Indian fur parties in winter. Their drying-racks for skins were everywhere and beneath them the ground was strewn with skulls and teeth of beaver and marten. I selected a tent site and kindled a roaring fire on it, burning it fairly dry. I burned that fire for several hours over the entire area to be covered by the tent, then raked away the fire and pitched the tent. This, with a fire in front of the tent, gave us a bed that stopped just short of saturation. We awoke in the same dull gray opaque cloak of cloud that we had lived in—not under—for days. I crawled out and was washing my face in the icy Athabaska. The clouds were scurrying in ragged masses across a leaden sky, when suddenly Heaven opened and the glory of the Lord shone through. Never can I forget that marvelous vision. Through a break in the all-obscuring stratum of lowest clouds appeared the pure snow-cowled head of the Black Friar; and, by a wonderful coincidence, through a tiny rift in the high clouds one single pencil of sunshine struck fair upon the snow, almost blinding the eye as it flashed and sparkled in the intense and unaccustomed light. That was the beginning. The clouds tore into shreds and fled away. We were camped in fairyland. Dazzling snow fields and the azure of glaciers hemmed us in. The Great Ones stood loftily about us. There towered Woolley, the Black Friar, Fortress Peak, the Dome, the Diadem, the Twins, Quincy and countless

unnamed monsters. Vast masses of rock, ice and snow stretched away to the Columbia Ice Field, to the overwhelming cone of Columbia itself and its great neighbor, King Edward VII. Far up the Chaba loomed the high unknown mountains and glaciers that wall in the valleys of the Chaba and its forks. And somewhere up there is Fortress Lake. I heard Nip murmur: "And I'm only the second woman in all the big round world to see this."

An attempt to reach Columbia from Camp Saturation failed, since the food supply had run too low to spare the time for trail cutting, and the West Branch was far too high to attempt to travel the bars. Fortress Lake, however, was within easy reach, though the Chaba head would prove unattainable, to our intense chagrin. We essayed the ford of the West Branch, Bruce as usual going ahead with the pack. The rest of us were by no means reassured when Adamson's horse was swept from his feet and sent swimming away down the swift current. However, he struggled safely to shore. Then we essayed the task, and got over without mishap. As we came together again some one asked, "Where's Biscuit?" The poor little dog had been washed down by the fierce current. We went on with heavy hearts, mourning her as lost, but she was the first to bark greeting to us on our return to Jasper. She had made her way back through the wilderness. We thought we picked up her tracks on our return journey, and they were paralleled in every instance by those of the coyote or the lynx. Decidedly Biscuit was not lonesome on her journey. We marched on up the bars of the Chaba, good firm footing if one was careful to avoid black

spots which are here always quicksand. The river was split into many channels, all of which proved readily fordable except one. I found that. My horse stepped into it and was instantly swimming. I prefer my ice water *inside* my tummy! The horse swam low. A great break now appeared between Fortress Peak and an unnamed black hulk beyond. In this depression, evidently, the lake lay. As we pried our way into the gap through enormous virgin timber, we finally came out upon a marshy grass-grown flat starred with white *spiralis* orchids. The flat was clearly a filled-in lake head.

A few steps more, and the lapis lazuli blue of the lake spread out before us, six or eight miles long and more than a mile wide. At its head was a huge jam of ancient logs, showing the prevailing winds. The lake was a marvel of grandeur of the cold, stern type that forbids intrusion. Great peaks border the lake and between them blue glaciers creep irresistibly to the water's edge. One enormous peak, presenting an unbroken slope of snow, forms the entire background at the foot of the lake. Fire has never visited the shores of Fortress Lake, and tall firs and spruces tower from a primeval forest bed almost waist deep in moss. The tremendous tangle of the decaying débris of such a virgin forest forbade a tour along the lake, though an ancient trail could be traced at places. The lake lies exactly on the Continental Divide, and from it on the Pacific side flows Wood River, emptying into the Columbia in the Big Bend country. Fortress Lake has hitherto been supposed to have but this one outlet. Robinson Crusoe and I, in the course of a delightful prowling, fortunately suc-

ceeded in finding a previously unknown outlet to the Arctic watershed, a superb subterranean discharge gushing, as a splendid spring, over bright green and orange colored mosses from under a spur or buttress of Fortress Peak.

In a level spot under enormous trees we made our outpost camp. Food was ebbing as low as our spirits. Even whilst setting up the tents, and with the belled horses wandering in the bush, a beautiful black-tail buck stalked curiously into camp. Bruce seized his rifle: "I'll cut his spine," he whispered, "if I shoot him in the heart he'll run a mile." And that wonderful marksman laid open the creature's spine in a hole into which one could thrust a fist. The heart and liver that night, smothered in the remaining onions, banished all apprehension about the food.

Even while we were butchering the deer, the trees overhead were crowded with enormous owls, attracted by the scent of blood. The dressed deer was hung up to a tree in the firelight to keep Bruin away. And it was well, for we discovered in the morning that a grizzly had walked into camp just outside the ring of firelight and hungrily watched and sniffed. He left behind him a message of his failure and disgust; curious habit of all carnivora except the cat tribe. I narrowly missed an interview with that bear. During the night I was awakened by the fire blazing up brilliantly. No one in the woods has any moral right to fail to investigate when roused from sleep by a light. I put on a pair of sneakers and peered from the tent. Bruce was lying asleep uncovered on the wet ground, his head pillowed on a root. I grabbed the camera and slipped forth. As I passed him he lifted his head:

"I thought you was a grizzly bear," he said, "only for your white feet." Then I asked him to lie down again, and I took a long exposure by firelight of that man of iron, who utterly disregarded all means of material comfort. To one who offered him a pillow, he said "A boot is just as good if it hasn't got hob-nails."

It seemed now definitely to have cleared, but we stayed one more day to stretch the wet pack ropes by winding them with all the strength of several men around the tree trunks and letting them dry thus. Bruce, perhaps in the prospect of return from a trip for which he really showed no marked enthusiasm, waxed interesting and communicative. As became one of the really great trappers of the North, he told of his adventures of the trapping lines and initiated us into his professional secrets. The wily wolverene, the trapper's enemy who follows the lines, springs the traps and destroys the fur, Bruce denominates "easy."

"Of course when you go into a new region, you must trap all the wolverenes first." "How?" "Why, drive your V of stakes against a tree trunk, set a trap in plain view in the corner and another hidden at the opening. He'll spring the one and get caught in the other as he does it."

For otter you must set your trap in a three-inch break in a beaver dam. Then put a few little stakes under water upstream from the trap. They will scratch the otter's breast as he swims through the break—which for some reason he's always sure to do—and he will put down his feet and get caught. But for the sticks, he would swim right over the trap. Wolves can be lured, when there is no snow, by set-

ting the trap just under water, a good wolf step from a log, stump or rock: then put moss on the trap and let the moss project above the surface of the water. Set the bait, a wild duck or a bit of venison, just beyond the trap. To get it, the wolf will step on the trap. Wolves traveling in snow will always step exactly in the same track each time they pass. Therefore go up beside a wolf trail in the snow and slip the trap through the snow just beneath a footprint. "You'll get him, sure," says Bruce.

The weather held good for an uneventful return. When we reached the familiar corral across from Jasper, Bruce bound two logs together with hay wire and on this frail footing he poled across the Athabaska to get the boat. Robinson Crusoe watched him. "I have too much respect for the Athabaska," he muttered, "to insult it that way." As we landed safely on the other shore a beautiful rainbow broke from a distant storm cloud and spanned the Colin Range. "Look," called Robinson, "next year we succeed!"

"Next year" had come, and we were eager as ever for the Athabaska sources. It was with keen pleasure, therefore, that we basked in the morning sun which shone down upon a carnival of packing. This time there were six of us, two of them new to the Athabaska country but devotees of the trail. One was a dear friend and college classmate, a *real* explorer whose triumphs reached from Labrador to Java, from St. Elias to Darjeeling. The other was—June. Describe her? Can't be done. But take beauty, youth, grace, wit and geologic lore, cast these ingredients into feminine form, with a little mole on the side of her nose, and you'll get—June. Of the veterans, our dear

Robinson Crusoe was missing. All was ready. The girls had been sitting in their saddles for fifteen minutes, to avoid amusing the assembled population of Jasper, adult and juvenile, by walking about in knickers. Closson Otto, our leader, a prince among guides, swung on his horse and we were off; Leslie Frost, the horse wrangler, and Ray Long, chiefest among trail chefs, keeping the pack train in semblance of line, with Tober, an Airedale bear dog, exercising a general and intense supervision. Little cared we now for the crossing of the river, for it had been spanned by a fine new military bridge on piles. Our pack train plunged into the foothills and we were merged in the Northern Silence. We rode our old trail of the year before; but it was new, for we could see things. From deep forest we wound back to high moraines and thence to a high camp on the very shoulder of Hardesty. This, when one can see it, is a beautiful peak of varicolored tilted strata, red Upper Jura sandstone piled upon white Jura beneath; and heaped upon both were strata of purple and brown, all subject to tremendous ice erosion, while over the whole is the fine glacier and cap of *névé* from which countless torrents tumble down the slope. We camped at timber line beside an icy spring and with lush pasturage for the horses. A noble scene unfolded before us to the limit of vision. Far and away reached the fortified valley of the Whirlpool, revealing a distant expanse of snow fields from which leaped forth a huge black fang of a peak, certainly one or other of those exploded celebrities, Hooker or Brown. Facing us in the foreground Edith Cavell was radiant with the alpenglow and its snow seemed

to hang in space silhouetted against a polychrome curtain of sunset clouds that put to shame the colorful imaginings of the maddest impressionist. Bathed in orange light rode the majestic Galleon, bow and stern high uplifted, and mast-like amidships, that wondrous pillar, a black volcanic plug. Behind us, imminent and vast, was the icy loom of Hardesty. "It's all so beautiful it hurts," choked June. And in the bright ray-shot twilight of ten o'clock, with all her previous conceptions of time and light outraged, she indignantly exclaimed: "What a way for the sun to behave!"

The high stage of water in the river made it certain that the Falls of the Athabaska would be well worth a detour. Nowhere can one realize so well as at this mighty cataract the tremendous power of water. To me, personally, not even the Niagara Rapids were so inspiring and terrifying. Men have gone through those rapids and lived. That adventure is not even imaginable here. The great river rushes wildly down an appreciable incline, turns sharply at right angles and plunges over a gigantic slab of rim rock a hundred feet into the depths of a dark, spray-filled canyon that it has carved out for itself scarce twenty feet in width. The confusion of waters as one looks down into the canyon is literally terrifying. Great trees come drifting down the swollen river, poise for an instant perpendicular at the brink and are hurled to their doom. They come forth from the mouth of the canyon, a quarter mile further down, little chips and matchwood. It is the Ojinjah Canyon raised to the *n*-th power.

The day's march brought us to the goat lick and



Athabasca Falls at Flood Stage. The brink of the main fall is at right of picture.
(See p. 236.)



Battle Axe in the Slough of Despond.



"Out of the Depths." (See p. 228.)

we camped in a jungle of wild roses. We had evidently been too late for them the year before. Never was there a rose garden that compared with this exquisite display. The luxuriant bushes rose above our shoulders as we rode through them. There were millions of them, all burdened with bloom. The air was heavy with their fragrance. The women wore them in their hair and as corsage clusters. The men wore them as boutonnières. The table—*i.e.*, pack mantle—was garlanded with them. June promptly rechristened our bivouac "Wild Rose Camp:" "Goat Lick" sounded too prosaic.

Among the lovely roses we laid over for a day's rest, and we had a rare opportunity to study the nesting habits of the bronze-backed humming bird, for a nest of these winged jewels hung on a slender twig above the river. The parent birds soon grew quite accustomed to being photographed, and came and went like flashing emeralds, feeding by regurgitation the ever hungry nestlings, no larger than beetles, thrusting up their little beaks in quivering eagerness. Long now gave spectacular proof of his qualities as a true successor of Brillat Savarin. He made real honest-to-goodness bread: no more of the despised bannock for us. Mixing the dough, he put it to rise in a large dishpan bedded in warm ashes contained in another dishpan still larger. Also the explorer gave us all a pointer on shaving in the woods, for he bedded his shaving mug in ashes in similar fashion. This is recommended for those who are so hopelessly civilized that they just *must* shave on the trail. But more earnestly still is it recommended that no shaving be done: a bushy growth of beard discourages many a

mosquito. And here it was that June bestowed the name of "The Bug House" upon the explorer's insect-proof tent; whence it necessarily followed that its occupant was "The Bug." I don't think he relished it. His celebrated name had failed to inspire respect and reverence for the first time. He got used to it, however, in time and bore it gracefully. You can't be angry for long with June. But the explorer himself was a man of vision and vocabulary; and June remains the Wild Rose of the Athabaska unto this day.

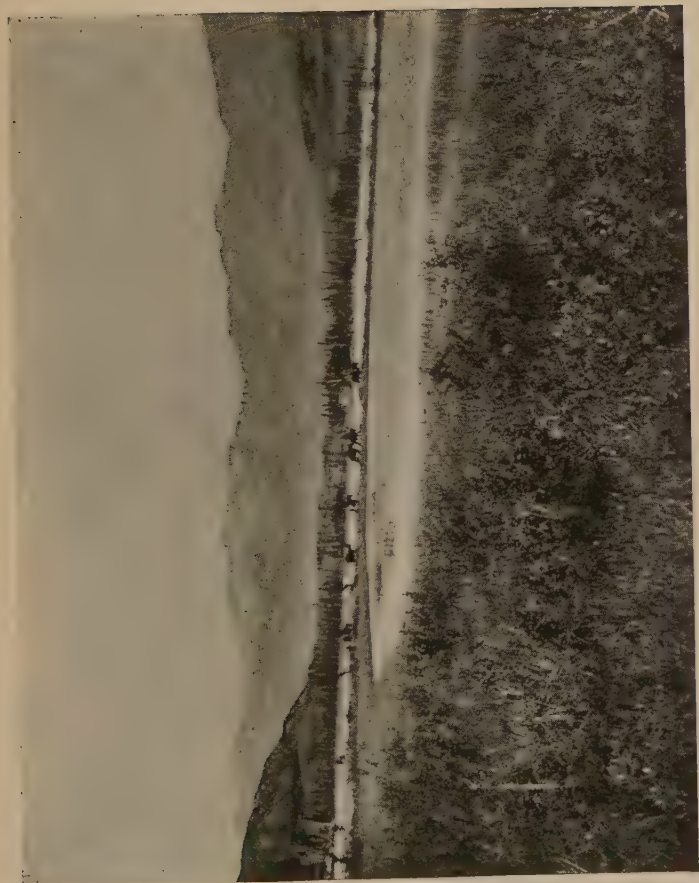
Good fortune came to us here, for it began to rain icily while a chill gale howled among the peaks. It was the only thing that could have insured for us the successful fording of the Sun Wapta. The going, however, was rather strenuous. Several deep muskeg pools had to be crossed, and the backwater from the swollen river had flooded them, bringing the water to the saddle seats. Bottomless muskeg covering a sunken forest lay back from the river, and it came to a choice of getting wet or of risking life and limb in the muskeg. The riders got over soaked and safe; but several pack horses fell back trying to scramble up the almost vertical bank, and one of these sons of Sathanas started bucking, broadcasting bacon and flour upon a dripping landscape. While Closson reconstructed, I played guide (for Closson well knew I couldn't get lost if I tried in that stretch of trail), and took the riders and the rest of the pack on to Ranger Camp. Great staircases of successive moraine levels here mounted high on the Hardesty Range as it gradually merged into the monstrous serrations of the Endless Chain, forming a counterfoil for the glorious Selwyn Range beyond the river and running parallel to it. These

moraine levels were carpeted with delicious strawberries. June concocted a marvelous strawberry shortcake. That was a work of art. The Explorer, a man of fastidious taste in strawberry shortcakes (as in certain other lines) confided to me that he considered it impossible to make an edible strawberry shortcake when bacon grease served as shortening and kitchen conveniences were lacking. Accordingly when June blandly inquired: "A piece of my shortcake, Mr. Bug?" that insect made immediate and earnest reply, "A small piece, Miss June; oh, a very small piece." He got it. That cake surpassed Delmonico's own; and the Explorer again confided to me his chagrin at the folly of his decision. And so it came to pass, some days later, when the successor of that wonderful shortcake spread its fragrance around our festal board—our festal pack mantle, I mean—the Explorer's answer to the same query was, "A large piece, Miss June; oh, a very large piece."

As we descended these titanic stairs toward the Sun Wapta, the clouds broke away and there before us, one on either hand of a low black range in the angle of the Sun Wapta and the Athabaska, gleamed in the distance two enormous white giants, the culminating peaks of all this great central *massif*, Columbia and Alberta, glittering cones of ice and snow. The Sun Wapta again proved easy fording after four days of cold, and we repeated our struggle of the year before over quakey bars and atolls, through jack-pine and 'slash' (*i.e.*, burned and fallen timber). The glories of our distant goal were in plain view many times daily, getting ever nearer. There was uplifted the cragged Woolley; beyond, Quincy and Fraser formed

fit acolytes to the solemn Black Friar radiantly cowed with snow and eternal ice. Across the river from them towered the battlemented Fortress and at the end of the vista between the tremendous pillars of this divine colonnade rose, clear against the sky, another great peak heretofore unknown to geographic records and unphotographed, white with unbroken snow from crest to base. Its calm majesty, its spotless purity, suggested to the Explorer a name; in our notes and maps it is recorded as the White Sister, a fitting companion to the stern Black Friar.

Arrived at last at the mouth of the Mount Columbia (west) Branch, Closson told us we should get to Columbia if it took a week's trail cutting. It did take three days of it; for through the tangled barrier of heavy down timber trail had to be cut until we could reach a point where the river bed widened and the river split up into a network of channels separated by bars along which we might march. Reach the bars we did; and we found the water high enough to make fording a problem. Several swims in the icy current failed to add to our material comfort. They failed also to stop us, for it is a curious paradox, though true, that wetting enthusiasm doesn't dampen it. Sometimes a fairly clear strip along the bank lured us ashore; and then muskeg, deep inlets and villainous mudholes laid vicious ambuscades for our undoing, and sent us hastening back to the bars crimsoned along the river's length with blooming epilobium. It was a hunter's paradise. Black-tailed deer broke from the thickets ahead of the pack and leaped in panic into the water, to vanish in stiff-legged bounds when they reached the bars; splendid caribou, after a curious look



Atoll Marching. (See p. 226.)



Mount Columbia and his Mighty Company. (See p. 241.)

at us, dashed off in their swinging, rangy trot; and Ephraim faded away with a "*whoof!*" of distrust.

We came now to the very last patch of horse feed between the main Athabaska and Columbia, and here perforce we camped. The great mountain dominated the landscape, a perfect cone magnificently glaciated and with the enormous ice field behind it sweeping up more than halfway to the summit on the southern and eastern flanks. Mount Columbia is the geographical apex of the continent. It is the only peak in the world, so far as I can learn, that drains directly from its central mass into three oceans. The noble glacier flowing down immediately before our eyes, the object of our quest, discharged from its grotto the west branch of the Athabaska, lying in the Arctic watershed; a branch of the Saskatchewan, on the Atlantic watershed, is fed by the snows of Columbia; while from the western slope of the mountain the Bush River flows into the Columbia, and so into the Pacific.

Our nearer approach to the mountain must be made on foot, and for several miles we walked toward the giant along the prostrate trunks of a once magnificent forest. Noble trees they had been, glorious trees, many of them four, five, six feet in diameter; and now they lay heaped in a wild wreckage of fire and storm. As we worked our way from trunk to trunk in weary zigzag progress, we were often six or eight feet above the ground and never once on it. Columbia was good to us that afternoon. Often these huge peaks remained cloud-wrapped for days at a time, or even weeks, but now the grandly beautiful mountain stood revealed in clear splendor, and though, as the evening

came on all too fast, it was swept and beaten with localized storms of hail and snow, these storms really enhanced the grandeur of the mountain in the changing lights.

The little patch of grass at our makeshift camp was a scant supply even for one night, and Frost slept by the river edge of it beside his tethered and saddled horse, ready to pursue at once in case of a stampede of the hungry animals. The morning drove us back down river. This second source of the Athabaska was ours. All went well until near our camp of two days before, "Skeeter Camp" we called it, and it earned its name. I was riding through a deep hole just at the shore line, when Monte stepped on a submerged log and fell with me, pinning my left knee against a rock. As he struggled I could feel my knee twisting horribly and the tendons apparently tearing from their attachments. "Is this what a breaking leg feels like?" I said to myself. But Monte got his footing again before my leg actually broke, and I rode on to camp with little discomfort. But when I dismounted and tried to walk—nothing doing. There we were, "a hundred miles from nowhere," and a useless leg. Heroic measures were taken. There could, of course, be no march the next day, so all day I bathed that knee with water hot as I could stand it, then crawled to the ice-cold river and stuck the leg in that. I kept that up all day, and the next we marched. Every step was agonizing; but when I felt that I couldn't take another I just took it. I am told that the hard usage saved the leg; otherwise it would probably have stiffened.

We had a glorious camp fire at Fortress Lake that night and Tober "pulled a bone." Tober was a

"wondrous wise" dog. Whether Biscuit had told him to be leery of fording, I know not; but at every ford Tober would come to Closson and stand erect on his hind legs. Closson would haul him up to a perch behind him on the horse's rump, and Tober would make the ford like a gentleman, leaping down when safely landed, and barking his thanks. But when that camp fire had burned low and everybody was seeing things in it, one charred root took shape as the head of an enormous bear. Tober, fire-gazing like the rest, like them also saw things and he saw that bear's head. Now a bear was to Tober like a red rag to a bull, and with a terrible snarl he leaped into the fire, seized the root, and pulled it forth. He was the most ashamed dog in British Columbia. At Fortress Lake we found a mute witness to a tragedy of the trapping lines: a slab, cut tombstone fashion and nailed to a tree. The inscription was, "DEAD Loss," followed by a list of food and equipment. Some poor fellow had staked his all on the traps the winter before, and had failed.

Up the Chaba from Fortress Lake lay our ultimate goal, the two remaining sources of the Athabaska. A reconnaissance showed no horse feed; so with three days' provisions we established a flying camp at the junction of the forks of the Chaba, sending the horses back to Fortress Lake in care of Frost and Long. We undertook the separate examination of the two forks. They meet at an acute angle, the one flowing from nearly due south, the other from slightly east of south. At the head of the left, or southern branch was a great glacier flowing down from the superb snow mountain we had named the White Sister. Moreover

from our camp the glacier appeared to be quite active, as large blocks of ice were stranded along the shore and on the bars, which here were not of sand but of rounded stones. This branch canyons rapidly as one ascends it, and a bold spur from an abutting peak furnished a ticklish bit of a climb before we reached the glorious *cirque* which constitutes the main source of the Athabaska. The view of this *cirque* bursts on the vision with the suddenness of a blow as the last intervening cliff is passed. Glaciers and cascades fall down the formidable walls on either hand but they are negligible in comparison to the splendor in front. Directly facing us rose in chill magnificence the pure, unbroken snow drapery of the White Sister, and down from it flowed the great glacier deeply crevassed and with its surface broken into innumerable seracs. The wall of ice presented at the snout of the glacier is fully one hundred feet in the sheer, and from an impressive grotto of azure ice the Athabaska poured forth in an impetuous flood tawny with glacial silt. Fine lateral moraines flanked the glacier, formed of finer ground detritus than is generally found in lateral moraines and hardened like walls of cement. We started to climb one of the moraines which gave easy access to the ice, as there was no *bergschrand* whatever: once on the ice, we might hope to gain the slopes of the main peak, though an ascent was clearly out of the question. The climb on the moraine to the ice was perfectly simple and fool-proof. My injured leg retarded me, and Nip and I were soon left behind by the others of the party. As we sat resting, I photographed the grotto and the infant Athabaska. Suddenly with a crashing roar the front of the glacier



Evening Peace. Blackfriar Group in middle distance. (See p. 240.)



The Athabaska Gushing from the Grotto of the Glacier.



The River Dammed by the great Ice Fall. (See p. 245.)

fell. Thousands of tons of ice, bergs like houses, fragments of all shapes and sizes, formed a gigantic dam at the glacier's foot. The river dwindled away and vanished, and the bed of the Athabaska was dry. Groaning and rumbling as of an earthquake was heard from the depths of the glacier, and then fully twenty yards to one side of the old grotto the ice exploded outwards and the river poured violently forth anew, cutting its way into the former channel and sweeping down the shattered ice with deafening crash. The camera lay open on my knee, and for once was ready at the psychological moment. All this convulsion awakened the curiosity of the wild things. The sounds were of nature, not of man, and they came to see. A bunch of goats looked down from a rocky spur and an enormous grizzly walked out not a hundred yards away and looked and sniffed and wondered. The length of this branch of the Chaba is about two miles.

The southeastern branch, about five miles in length, has its origin in a large glacier flowing down at a much gentler slope and therefore with a much smoother surface, from an ice field lying to the west of Mount King Edward and sweeping behind it. This ice field, as was rendered fairly certain by the Explorer's ascent of a subsidiary peak, is a continuation of the Columbia Ice Field and probably also joins with the ice fields of the White Sister. This branch issues from the glacier in fairly full volume, but without any spectacular effects. Its upper portion is split into many channels by pebble bars, but as it nears the junction it flows wildly through a fine narrow canyon whose rim is thickly forested with heavy open timber. There

is luxuriant grass among the trees and the glade is alive with black-tailed deer. There were also many fool hens, which we killed with stones and had a fried chicken dinner with canned cream gravy. Our camp site was fairly carpeted with pinguiculas; and it was most interesting to watch under the microscope the slow absorption of the vital parts of their insect prey, in all stages of its progress. Some were still feebly kicking, while of others only a shell remained, like the empty shell of a cicada in summer.

We had now fully accomplished the objects of the expedition and when the men appeared from Fortress Lake with a fresh and rested bunch of horses, we started happily back in fine weather for a beautiful and uneventful trip.

At "Skeeter Camp" we celebrated. Long served a wonderful feast, and on the level sward under the great trees, to the music of a cracked harmonica, June gave a dance. It wound up in a hilarious reel: "Virginia," the Explorer called it; but June said that no one ever heard of tripping over dewberry vines in a Virginia reel, and that this particular one must be called the "Ginibaska."

CHAPTER X

CIRCLING THE ROBSON *MASSIF*

The weather in 17 B.C. Muskegs of the Moose. Concerning fire. The climb to Moose Pass. Wonderful flowers. Curly hits the trail. Majesty of Robson. Pocahontas. Ville-neuve. The volcanic valley. Difficulties in pitching tent. The springs. A fumarole. Four-footed companions. The cougar.

THE fourth of August was bright and clear and cool in 17 B. C. How do I know? Why the best way in the world; *I was there!* "Liar!" cries the unbeliever.

"True," say I: and not only was I there, but Nip and June and the Explorer and the whole bunch that had come back from the sources of the Athabaska and hadn't yet had enough of the trail and the forest and the mountains.

By the way, I forgot to say that I am making no claims to describing the weather which befell on a certain day some nineteen-and-a-half centuries ago, so that whoever cried "Liar!" probably misunderstood me. "17 B. C." is a station on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway just seventeen miles west of the boundary line between British Columbia and Alberta; and the traveler who is there told "where he is at" is supposed to derive therefrom that he is just seventeen miles deep in that wonderful province of mountains and lakes and great wild rivers and cedars and salmon. 17 B. C. is not far below Yellowhead Lake and the

sources of the Frazer; and its name clings to the landscape (there's nothing else to cling to) just where the tumultuous Moose River of evil fame leaps into the still more tumultuous Fraser. The entire population of 17 B. C. that August morning consisted of "Old Man" Phillips, whose excuse for existence is that he is the father of the famous guide, Donald (Curly) Phillips; his son-in-law, Bert Wilkins, who somehow or other had persuaded Curly's pretty sister to marry him; Joe Warner, the horse wrangler; and a bunch of cayuses.

We had set our hearts on Mount Robson, the loftiest of the Rockies of Canada; and in order to see Robson properly and adequately, we decided to circle the entire Robson *massif*, a distance of about eighty miles. Personal equipment was soon transferred from express train to pack train, and we were crawling up a steep foothill beneath which roared the Moose River. The tall foothill was rounded and bare of timber, but millions of black-eyed Susans were nodding in amazement at the intruders while countless chimes of blue bells rang a colorful alarm. The scene from the top of this great hill was enchanting; the peaks far up the Moose, Trios to one side, the Colonel to the other, towered in the clear air and we had a wonderful glimpse of the rear of Resplendent with two glaciers coursing down from its snowy crest, one of them enclosing an island strip of sharp rock, projecting narrowly above the snow-covered ice like a cock's comb.

We descended that barrier hill to a series of water-soaked muskeg meadows intersected with glacial streams and wonderfully grown with ripe strawberries

and dewberries, alternating with pretty patches of waving pussy-toe rushes. We had been warned of villainous trail in the Moose River country; but vaingloriously thinking that the Moose hadn't anything it could show us about trail, we rather sneered at it. Our punishment was swift and complete, and forthwith we began to learn how bad a trail can be. Everywhere was bottomless muskeg, into which the horses sank to the belly floundering, plunging, kicking, and requiring to be unpacked, extricated and repacked with lavish expenditure of remarks in two languages, English and Profane. My horse was romantically named Robin Hood. In half a day that name was corrupted to Pin Head; in another, to Bone Head. I had bestridden many a trail horse of varied characteristics, but never the equal of that God-forgotten equine freak. He was utterly inexperienced of muskeg, and feared it abjectly. He knew not where to put his feet; and when he did put them anywhere, it was always in the wrong place, and down he would go. My injured knee was hurting fiendishly; but by the time I had leaped from his back for life and limb some half a dozen times, I concluded to march on foot and lead the beast whenever we hit muskeg—which was ninety-nine times a day. When we had time to consider the landscape it was gorgeous; but we were usually considering the lilies, great orange-red tiger lilies that bloomed in profusion in that accursed muskeg amid wonderful clusters of white and yellow cypripediums. It was "watch your step" continuously, for the muskeg wouldn't even bear the weight of a man. Even the steep hillside trails, by which we occasionally crossed a huge buttress to the peaks above, were of the blackest

slime. All were compelled to walk these wretched hills. Fortunately all pack horses are accustomed to being haltered in head-to-tail tandem and were not at all sensitive about their caudal appendages—besides, they could hardly have pulled a hind leg out of the muskeg to kick with, anyway. So the ladies merely caught hold firmly of a reliable tail, and the cayuse hauled them out of the muskeg and up hill. We called the device the Tailevator.

No one regretted an early order to camp in a comparatively solid grass patch on some rather high ground along the Moose, fronting the Colonel in his icy white uniform, and a cup of steaming tea soon set us right with the world. Mosquitoes hummed like a thousand Jewsharps and the head nets were removed only to eat. Bert was *some* cook! It is really remarkable what excellent, resourceful and inventive cooks most of these trail men are. And they're so good-natured with it all. If you "clear the cloth and lick the platter clean" and are still hungry, they'll cook an extra portion without a word. Bert couldn't resist a regretful comment on the rising cost of bacon once when our appetites had acquired an unusual edge: "Pork," said he, "is getting so damn high that hog tracks are worth a quarter apiece."

The march next day was a monotony of misery; muskeg, burnt timber and nasty broken rock. Progress was necessarily very slow, and we camped again amid hungry hordes of bulldogs and mosquitoes close by a pretty pond where a brood of wild ducks swam. We were still facing and slightly outflanking the Colonel, gaining a magnificent view of his five fine glaciers pouring down into two *cirques*.



The Couch of Luxury. (See p. 233.)



Night in the Tipi. Note the shadows of the occupants cast on the tent wall by the fire.
(See p. 189.)

Immediately above our tent towered Trios Peak, its almost vertical black cliff giving a superlatively fine background to our little Main Street of tents. The weather was gorgeously clear and bitterly cold: water froze at the tent entrances. There was plenty of wood for a huge fire and no risk in kindling one, as we were well out from the trees; so we enjoyed that luxury to the full. Fire in the wilderness is both your best friend and your bitterest enemy. You dare not be without it in the woods; you dare neither take liberties with it nor neglect it. Control it, and it is your faithful slave and helper; let it get ever so little out of hand, and it becomes a fiend that will devour you. Recklessness with your matches is certain either to freeze or to cremate you. One of the epics of the region is the story of a prospector who, with his partner, wandered out of the lower Klondyke and eventually reached the Peace River, reduced to their last match. Grimly they struggled on for life through the interminable forest, carrying embers in a bucket and stopping to nurse a new fire into being and replenish the store of precious coals whenever they seemed about to die out. The partner died of exhaustion. The survivor, wreckage of a once strong man, was found delirious by a party of prospectors and brought into Hinton more dead than alive. He had carried the precious fire thirty-eight days.

Our genial blaze died down. The logs collapsed in a whirl of sparks, and we turned in with the close draped mosquito netting snugly tied to repel assaults, and just as we were dropping off to sleep an entirely irrelevant question was shrieked at us from the next tent:

"Are there any rocks in your tent?"

"Only enough to remind us we are camping. Go to——sleep."

So long as we traveled the Pacific watershed the trail was a succession of villainous muskegs, setting most disquieting traps for men and horses. The only consolation was the wonderful strawberries crimsoning the ground. They surpassed in size any wild strawberries we had ever seen, and in flavor they surpassed everything; and each successive strawberry shortcake of June's manufacture surpassed its predecessor. At last, to our infinite satisfaction, came the last camp in this muskeg-cursed region, and we looked across the Moose River upon the long ascent to Moose Pass. The crossing of that pesky river next morning was safely accomplished, for, happily, the ubiquitous softness did not extend to the river bed. Deep and swift and rocky of bed though it was, it gave us fairly comfortable passage. On and on up that glorious pass we trailed; through heavy timber getting smaller and smaller, sparser and sparser, as we gained altitude. We reached timber line, and a marvelous feast of color was spread out before us. Immediately to the left a stern glacier seamed the mountain wall which rose steep and forbidding. Far to the right, a couple of miles away (so broad is the pass at the crest) rose a beautiful snowy range with a remarkable fault in one of its component ridges. A wedge of vertical strata had been shot up through the horizontal uplift and showed beautifully outlined in snow. All the extent of country between these ridges, and ahead of the skyline of the pass, was the most amazing floral display imaginable. One could scarcely see the groundwork

of green into which all the varied tints that nature can show were woven like an Oriental carpet. All the texts of the Koran were there that tell of the loveliness of nature. We could read them as we rode. About thirty species of blooming plants were identified. I can hardly recall a single mountain flower that was not present in profusion, even those elsewhere comparatively rare.

When we reached the crest of the pass a far different panorama unfolded. Peak beyond peak, range beyond range of great mountains stretched northward until they purpled in their remoteness. Nearer at hand Calumet and Mumm were magnificent; the latter especially, its crown beaten by a severe local storm and illuminated by cloud-filtered amber light in long pencils. The actual mass of Robson was concealed from us by a shoulder so near as to blot out the huger mass behind it. And down in the depths, bathing the feet of those grand peaks, twisted and coiled the Big Smoky, child of the Hunga Glacier, on its tortuous way to the Peace River and thence to the Arctic Ocean. But all the enchantment was in the distance. The northern descent of Moose Pass and its southern slope lie in different worlds. Barren, broken rock lay before us, down which the pack labored precariously, and we thanked our lucky stars, all and several, when a broad snowdrift overspread the sharp unstable rocks. We rode those snowdrifts thankfully, even at the risk of breaking through. Our rock pile petered out far below timber line. There was good grass and the scattered spruces were magnificent in size. We had scarcely outspanned and were pitching tents with one eye on the teapot and with noses working to the

scent of bacon like a setter's to the scent of quail, when the distant threat over Mumm made good and it began to snow violently. But the boughs were cut and the beds built and dry, so we just let it snow!

At supper we were surprised by a call from Curly himself. With another small party he was camped at the foot of the pass beside the Smoky, and came up afoot to see how we were faring. A visitor in the wilderness is always a surprise, and we "gammed" away in true sailor fashion. Darkness came on and still Curly stayed. Finally the night draped itself about us like a black cloak; and at nearly midnight this Superman of the wood and wild started back, feeling for the trail with his feet and crossing the Smoky by the "monkey bridge" of a slippery wet log. He couldn't see his hand before his eyes; and yet he had essayed this fearful jaunt unnecessarily, deliberately, and without misgiving or apprehension of any kind. That is the breed of men that conquer the wilderness. In going into the wilds, never think of what might happen. Present risks are enough to face. Nerves and the wild are incompatible; and if the prospective trail traveler has any imagination, he'd better leave it at home. We appreciated this next day going down that awful trail which Curly had safely passed practically blindfold. The trail dropped steeply to the Big Smoky, a formidable stream even here, so near its parent glacier. Reaching and crossing the impetuous stream we turned sharply to the left for the ascent of Robson Pass. The weather was utterly vile, and sharp gusts of snow and sleet stung our faces. Ptarmigan were all about us, fearless little creatures, already beginning to take on their

snowy winter plumage. One saucy little chap perched on a snowdrift curiously inspected the hand outstretched to catch him and then pecked it. Broiled ptarmigan are most excellent, but that little fellow's courage saved him from the frying pan. As we gained elevation, the weather partially cleared, and by a sudden turn past an obstructing hill, we stood face to face with the giant.

Curving in a vast arc to the left and rear of him swept the enormous Hunga Glacier reaching up and away to a great sloping snow field, above which the black peak rises and which clothes Resplendent to its very apex. Contrary to the usual habit of glaciers, Hunga has two well-defined grottoes. The turbid stream from one of them flows to form the Big Smoky, on the Arctic watershed: while the stream from the other is the ultimate source of the Grand Fork of the Fraser, and starts off on its long journey to the Pacific after a brief rest in lovely Berg Lake, a great glacier bowl of the ancient days now filled to the brim and gleaming blue in the occasional sunshine. To the right of Hunga's foot rises the bleak black cone of Rearguard, like a sentry before the palace of the King. Then—Robson: the colossus of the Canadian Rockies, 13,700 feet of looming splendor crowned with a flashing diadem of ice, *névé* and snow, from which, down the flank of the mountain, two beautiful glaciers, the Tumbling and the Blue, flow in an almost perpendicular ice cascade. Both these noble glaciers discharge into Berg Lake; one directly, and constantly "calving" great masses of ice, the other less impressively through a terminal moraine.

On several occasions glaciers have graciously deigned

to show off for our benefit, and this Tumbling beauty was no exception. As we skirted the shore of the lake a tremendous fall of ice came plunging into the water with the crash of artillery, raising a great wave of three or four feet which came rushing and curling across the lake to break at the very hoofs of our horses, while the new-born bergs danced and tossed on the troubled waters.

We camped for a day in the full splendor of the mighty mountain. A maze of beauty was all around us; snow-capped peaks which would have seemed of the first order had they not been dwarfed by the august Presence, great snow fields and crawling glaciers crevassed in blue fissures. Conspicuously to our right towered Whitehorn, splendidly draped with a noble glacier. That irresistible flow of ice had pushed before it a great moraine, cleaning away everything down to bedrock and now grinding and crunching that as it poured over the brink of a profoundly deep gorge. Innumerable ribbony cascades falling in filmy streams from the ice into this gorge gave it a name, Valley of a Thousand Falls. This glacier merged above into an extensive snow field, from the midst of which rose the Gendarme, entirely surrounded by the ice. From the crest of this ice field to the northward we beheld a wondrous confusion of mountains and glaciers, conspicuous among them the striking Mural Glacier, covering the level top of a vertical cliff like the icing on a cake and avalanching impressively over the wall at frequent intervals.

We climbed down the side of the gorge to get the great peak in frontal exposure, walking along an ancient forested moraine commanding a fine view of



Mount Whitehorn with Cloud Banner. (See p. 256.)



Mount Robson from the Grand Fork of the Fraser River. (See p. 257.)

the Emperor Fall, the discharge of Berg Lake, a cataract of noble size and splendor. Robson, in its singular frontal elevation, does not look like the same peak as when seen from rear and flank. It presented a sharp narrow triangle, too steep for much snow or ice to cling, but awe-inspiring from its enormous dimensions. The face rises from the floor of the valley at lovely Kinney Lake almost vertically about ten thousand feet in a scarcely broken wall, quite the finest mountain wall I have ever seen, and, I believe, the finest sheer precipice in North America. It towers so loftily, so imminently—"now, now about to fall"—that one's instinctive impulse is to throw up a puny arm to ward off the catastrophe.

The descent to the Valley of a Thousand Falls is a tortuous, beautiful trail by no means difficult and not at all risky, except in one place where a dangerous fissure had appeared in the cliff and an entire rocky point was liable to jar off at any moment and go crashing down, trail and all, into the gorge where the Fraser Grand Fork leaped in one cascade after another. The order was: "Dismount all and walk past the danger point: then catch your horses as they come down."

The rock point did not fall. It may be there yet, for all I know; but in all likelihood the British Columbia winters have "done for it" ere this. Then it was all plain sailing — funny how these salt-water metaphors will intrude—down a trail through a burned forest with a few glorious cedars still remaining, a mysterious salvage. We rode nearly all that trail sadly, twisted in the saddle and facing astern, so marvelously rose the monster peak behind us, clear

in the sunlight and with white clouds drifting across its head. But even ahead there was beauty; for at one or two angles of the trail we caught fascinating glimpses of the faraway peaks of the Gold Range, unexplored and unknown, reputed difficult beyond belief. And thus, with a few incidental fords of the Grand Fork, we came at last to the railway, the circuit of the Robson *massif* transformed from a fascinating prospect to a fascinating retrospect.

SOLITUDE BY TWOS

The old saw, "Two are company; three a crowd," isn't supposed in these modern times to hold true for long after matrimony. It is fashionable nowadays for any married pair beyond the honeymoon stage to be just a trifle bored with each other. Imagine, then, how old-fashioned—even socially obsolete—Nip and I must be, to go into the solitary wilderness for two weeks absolutely alone, with all our bridges to civilization burned behind us—and all this with more decades back of us than it is pleasant to count. We had heard of a wonderful valley of hot springs, "'way back of beyond," where the hot luxurious water would soak into one's very bones and marrow and dissolve away any noxious germ therein lurking. It seemed worth while for us to find this rare volcanic valley of the thermal springs and to take the waters in primitive style.

We were to make the start from Pocahontas, a mournful little coal mining village perched high above the Athabaska at the foot of Roche Miette and looking sootily across at Roche à Perdrix, some distance

below Jasper. We made a dismal landing. It was black night, nearly the middle of it, and raining in sheets instead of drops, when we pitched our packs from the train into a black void at Pocahontas, and followed them with faith "as a grain of mustard seed," but not much bigger. The Pocahontas station is a shed, open to the four winds and fifty rains; and when the train pulled out, desolation sat upon our souls. Down the track gleamed two points of light. They moved. They drew nearer. Lanterns, by Jove! Never were men more warmly welcomed than our outfitter and guide, Baety, and his wrangler, Robbins. They shouldered our packs and we set off on an interminable midnight jaunt through falling laminæ of rain and through mud to the ankles. It was a friendly, clinging, intimate sort of mud. We walked and walked and then walked some more. We came at last to a rambling, one-story structure, a mere shack of boards, and were told that it was a hotel. The rooms were separated by board partitions only and afforded no privacy whatever as against hearing nor protection against certain irregularities of behavior not unknown in Pocahontas. Your frontier mining town is temperamental, to say the least. But everything was scrupulously clean and the bed good. We turned in, however, with some misgivings.

But all misgivings were needless; for we found, when we came to life in the morning, that our Boniface was none other than Frank Villeneuve, known for his exploits with "bad actors," biped and quadruped alike, all over Canada and in the Arctic Seas as well. His presence and prestige were as good as an insurance policy—better, in fact, for there is some inconvenience

to be undergone before one (or his heirs) can collect on the policy. Baety and Robbins were on hand bright and early. Baety was the quiet, silent, efficient man of the wilderness; Robbins looked as if he had just stepped out of a penny dreadful, and we felt instinctively like lining up side by side, lifting our hands high and praying him to leave us our lives and carfare to Jasper. He wore high heeled boots, long haired chaparejos, a blue shirt open at the neck, a vivid bandanna, an enormous Stetson with a silver cord, and a blond mustache that drooped ferociously like the tusks of a walrus. He had the "cold, fierce, blue eyes" that the thrillers tell of; but he was the kindest, mildest bandit imaginable.

Purchases at the Company store were soon made, and we were off into the high foothills that reached back into barren fireswept ranges. At turns of the trail we caught wonderful views of the great valley of the Athabaska, reaching away to the northward and flowing between low, brown, unimpressive ranges on its way out of the Rockies. The Fiddlebacks and the Colin Range cut off for us all the grandeur along the upper river. After four or five hours' riding along a comfortable trail with never a hair-raising spot in it, we descended a sharply declining hill into what was, if not the Valley of the Shadow, at least a Valley of Shadows. Fiddle Creek roared in its depths, and its walls were so lofty, so steep, and towered so close that the sun had access to it only for a short time in the middle of the day. It was one gloomy corner of the universe. Steam, rising in clouds from the numerous pools, drifted through the valley, and sulphurous fumes, invisible but of heavy odor, issued from a

healthy fumarole, with a mouth as big as a dishpan, opening in the vertical face of the cliff just above the hottest of the springs. A crude bath house, thrown together by some prospectors supplemented the cruder wickiups of the Indians. The bath house was an affair of logs chinked with sphagnum moss, and through it the hot water was conducted by means of a trough hollowed out from a log and filled with sphagnum. The steam densely filled the eight foot square cabin. The floor was of poles closely laid and covered with steaming sphagnum. There was no door, for one had to breathe.

The method of taking the baths was to soak as long as one could endure the process in that one of the seven or eight springs the temperature of which was endurable by a person of strong will. The springs were of varying temperatures, apparently decreasing according to the distance of the spring from some central subterranean cauldron. The spring to which we ultimately hardened ourselves was of 127° F. After remaining in the water to the limit of endurance, one wrapped in a heavy blanket and lay on the floor of that steam filled cabin until the dashing stream that flowed icily through the canyon fairly began to rise with the perspiration that flowed copiously from every pore of the victim in the bath house. This is possibly a bit exaggerated, but it didn't feel so at the time. Then, when the skin was literally sweated dry, the bather crept or was carried to the tent and sank away to slumber. The régime was two baths a day. I should add that the springs had been walled up into great pools by large smooth stones laid in the ever abundant sphagnum.

The problem of pitching our tent was a serious one. There was not in that canyon level ground to pitch a nine-by-twelve tent; and no smaller one would serve for a two weeks' residence. The men were compelled to build out one corner of the tent floor with logs, overhanging the wildly racing torrent. It was utterly impossible to converse in ordinary tones in the tent; our voices were drowned out by the steady roar of the stream, and we had to shout at each other across the five feet of space that separated our beds. At last we were ship-shape and ready for housekeeping. The men cut a fine supply of firewood for the folding camp-stove we had brought in with us, and then took leave of us. We were alone in the wilderness. Afraid? No. What was there to be afraid of? The canyon was of a weird, wild beauty, and the lure was strong to do some exploring. But that was taboo. Of course, being sane, we did no prowling about or climbing. The danger-number in the mountains is two. Three gives a margin of safety; for in case of accident one can care for the sufferer, the other go for aid. The whole canyon was in unstable equilibrium and the danger from falling rock imminent. An accident to one would probably have meant the death of both. So we bathed, sweated, ate, slept and photographed, confining all exploring around to the ill-defined trail. This necessary restriction of activity became a bit irksome as the days passed, but there was plenty to do to dispel the monotony. For one thing we applied the theory and formulæ of permutations and combinations to our stock of grub, and many were the gastronomic conglomerates we evolved. Some of them were good. Others we haven't tried since.



Close-up of a Beaver—a rare photograph. (See p. 165.)



The Tent in Miette Canyon. (See p. 262.)

Almost every kind of thing that boasts four legs (and many with six) either lived in that canyon or paid frequent calls. Deer skipped before us in the trail. Porcupines awkwardly ambled over the rocks; but for some unexplained cause they never annoyed us in the tent. The lesser creatures were legion; rats, mice, squirrels, hares. They knew no fear of man. They were in the tent and out of it. When we were lying quietly in our beds, they would steal toward us for a "close-up" and stare at us with beady eyes. If one poked a finger at some of the wood-rats, the reward was a harmless bite. One night I fortunately woke and heard high jinks in the bread box. That precious commodity needed careful watching, so I investigated in the dark. Something hit me on the forehead as it jumped, glanced off as from an ivory globe, hit the canvas wall of the tent and scurried to safety. It was of course an innocent little kangaroo rat. The littlest wood-mice became a domesticated and unbearable nuisance. We had among the camp paraphernalia a great old-fashioned iron kettle of the fat, pot-bellied type, brought along to boil 'spuds.' I half filled it with water, pinned a piece of cheese to a chip and set it afloat in the kettle. The kettle was set on the ground and an incline constructed from ground to rim of kettle for the convenience of the mice. The device worked. We threw a kettle of mice into the stream daily. We baked our potatoes, and what our successors in the use of that iron pot didn't know, didn't hurt them. One night Nip yelled across the tent that she heard the whimpering child-cry of the cougar. I laughed at her and said there wasn't one in the region, more to reassure her

than that I actually believed it, for wherever deer abound the great cats flock. Next morning, a rare treat by daylight, we saw him standing by a fallen tree on the mountain side, lashing his tail to and fro, a perfect specimen of tawny feline beauty, some nine feet from nose to tail-tip (*n.b.*, I didn't measure him; I'm guessing). Birds were as conspicuous by their absence as quadrupeds by their abundance, probably because of the rising steam and sulphur fumes. The situation strikingly recalled Vergil's description of Aornos, the yawning mouth of the underworld over which birds never flew because of the exhalations. One beautiful little bird, however, seemed to find the joy of life in this forbidding gorge; probably because he lived his intense, vivid life literally in the dashing stream aerated by a million bubbles. These dainty birds were the water ouzels. They were flying through the waterfalls, diving into the pools and running a few steps along the bottom pursuing the tiny aquatic creatures that form their food. Then out they would dash again into the air like a bubble bursting with a flying spray of drops, balance a second on a mossy stone, and with a plunge and a splash dive in to do it all over again a million times a day.

These remote thermal springs are destined one day to become a great resort. Their waters are not as swiftly efficacious as those of the Sinclair, though they proved very beneficial in our two weeks' stay. The Miette hot springs lack the great beauty of the Sinclair. There is none of the marvelously brilliant rock color nor any of the glorious views of snow-clad peaks seamed with glaciers such as we enjoyed at the Sinclair. The evidences of vulcanism were of form rather

than of color, and there appears to have been volcanic activity of a seismic nature at no very remote period. All the rocks were balanced, unstable, tottering. The whole aspect is somber; a fearfully rugged, almost sunless gorge of brown shattered rock, filled with steam and sulphurous odors. The waters themselves were highly impregnated with sulphur. We drank it copiously.

Our stay was really an experience brand-new in every way; a hermitage for two, if you please, but for two very contented hermits. I should imagine it a fine place, however, to foment quarrels between the irritable and the *ennuyés*. The two weeks drew to a close and the food supplies shrank to the vanishing point. But our calculations had been good; and as we smacked our lips over the last baked potato, the bells of the pack leader came tinkling down the great hill into the canyon. It was with a real pang that we turned for a last look at the rising steam and the great brown mountains ere a bend in the trail buried us in the open forest that lay between us and the oppressive comforts of Pullman sleepers and dining cars. Our days on the trails of the Rockies were over.

CHAPTER XI

SONNETS OF THE TRAIL

(Machine-made in America)

TO THE FOREST TRAILS

MYSTERIOUS beckoner of wandering feet,
Thy clear compelling call allures the man
Who thrills to music of the Pipes of Pan,
And deems all pleasure but an empty cheat
Save that which lies where sky and mountains meet.
O foot-worn groove in forest floor, where ran
Coueurs-de-bois, trapper and Indian,
Lead me to beauty, peace and joy complete.

For as I wander on from blaze to blaze
Slashed deep and resin-crustcd in the pines,
I seem to see fair wood nymphs thread the maze
Of forest, and the breezes whisper lines
Of verse immortal, set to music rare,
And God's pure Spirit floats upon the air.

THE CAMP FIRE

The Camp Fire's flames leap billowing on high,
While Night and Forest, crowding blackly near,
Bring gloom and loneliness and darksome fear.
Forth from the fire-lit ring the dazzled eye
Strains toward a breaking twig or distant cry.

The glowing logs fall in, and through the clear
Night air rise myriad starry sparks, and here
And there the embers flicker and to ashes die.

So burns life's fire. The Present's vivid blaze,
Dazzling the vision, blinds us to the maze
We yet must thread to reach the long Straight Trail;
The Past—dead ashes, with some flickering spark
Of fading memory-light still glowing pale;
The Future—veiled, impenetrably dark.

TO A TINCUP OF TEA

Thou brew of magic leaf, which far Japan
Sips mid the cherry bloom of earliest Spring,
Or 'neath wistaria clusters blossoming
On vine-draped arbors, while fair Thea San
Refills the cups of porcelain daintier than
The bubbling crystal wine-glass poets sing
In western lands—herself a dainty thing
Of slant-eyed beauty, smiling all she can—

Receive my homage, wonder working brew,
Solvent of weariness, recalling heat
To chilled, snow-pelted frames, diffusing through
The being life and rest. Thou 'rt drink and meat
To weary toilers of the trail. To me
Thou art my woodland idol, blessed Tea.

TO A CAYUSE

Oh, patient Pinto of the tousled mane,
Standing all braced, your ears laid flatly back,
Your belly swelling as I take in slack
Of cinch rope, heaving taut with might and main

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The diamond hitch—of pack-horse life the bane—
That aims to make of you and of your pack
One welded whole, as on steep trails you tack;
What thoughts run riot in your cunning brain?

Your dreamy eye sees two close growing trees
To bolt between and scrape your load away;
You plan the chance of steep descents to seize
To shiver loose your pack, whereby you may
Spread broadcast flour, cheese, bacon, blankets, tents,
Unheeding packers' lurid compliments.

TO A PORCUPINE

By day you crouch in pines, a hazy blur;
By night you amble into camp and gnaw
At everything you find, save axe and saw——
Though bridles, boots, and saddles you prefer.
Oh, waddling, animated chestnut burr,
Naught comes amiss to your capacious maw,
Nor hangs above your reach of tooth and claw:
You Prince of Nuisances with pins for fur!

A murrain take you! Nay, but stay my hand:
The law protects you—why, I ask; oh, why?
Because you trail marauding through the land
May I not smite you as you amble by?
Your life is spared for mine! Live on unharmed;
'Tis you the lost and starving take unarmed.

TO A TIFI

Thou cone-formed shelter of the fourteen poles,
The tent alone wherein a fire may burn,
I love thee. Now the open smoke-wings turn
Away from howling winds. The storm cloud rolls

Sleet-laden o'er us, but within our souls
Reign joy and peace, with never a concern
How wild the gale. And like a golden urn
The tipi softly glows mid cedar boles.

Best joy of wildwood nights 'tis thine to give,
The while we linger 'round the crackling flame,
And hear the tales of lives that strong men live
Among their winter traps, the thrilling game
That man plays with the powers of the wild,
And Nature conquered—never reconciled.

MUSKEG

Obnoxious, pulpy, saturated mass,
Deluding reckless riders to their loss!
A plunging cayuse falls ere half across,
Mired in the toils of bottomless morass
Now deep in valleys, now on crest of pass.
The Pinto's down! Throw off the hitch and toss
His pack and mantle in the spongy moss!
Entrapped! Poor Pinto sinks beneath the grass.

Muskeg! So innocent to untrained eyes;
Unhallowed bog to those who know you best.
Sweet flowers you flaunt whereon the butterflies,
Kin to the Fairies, flutter down to rest.
Exquisite orchids, lilies red as blood,
Green grasses, cover quivering depths of mud.

